

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah,
the All-beneficent, the All-merciful*

قال الله تعالى:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهَبَ عَنْكُمُ الْرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرُكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا

Indeed, Allah desires to repel all impurity from you, O People of the Household, and purify you with a thorough purification.

(*Sūrat al-Ahzāb* 33:33).

Prophetic traditions, mentioned in most reliable Sunnī and Shī‘ite reference books of *hadīth* and *tafsīr* (Qur’ānic Exegesis), confirm that this holy verse was revealed to exclusively involve the five People of the Cloak; namely, Muḥammad, ‘Alī, Fātimah, al-Hasan, and al-Husayn, peace be upon them, to whom the term ‘Ahl al-Bayt (People of the House)’ is solely dedicated.

For instance, refer to the following references:

(1) Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH), *al-Muṣnād*, 1:331; 4:107; 6:292, 304. (2) *Sahīh Muslim* (d. 261 AH), 7:130. (3) At-Tirmidhī (d. 279 AH), *Sunan*, 5:361 et al. (4) Ad-Dūlābī (d. 310 AH), *al-Dhurriyyah at-Ṭāhirah al-Nabawiyyah*, p. 108. (5) Al-Nassā’ī (d. 303 AH), *as-Sunan al-Kubrā'*, 5: p. 108, 113. (6) Al-Ḥākim an-Naysābūrī (d. 405 AH), *al-Muṣadrak ‘ala’s-Ṣahīhayn*, 2:416, 3:133, 146, 147. (7) Az-Zarkāshī (d. 794 AH), *al-Burhān*, p. 197. (8) Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī (d. 852), *Fath al-Barī Sharh Ṣahīh al-Bukhārī*, 7:104.

As for Shī‘ite reference books of *hadīth*, refer to the following references:

(1) Al-Kulaynī (d. 328 AH), *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, 1:287. (2) Ibn Babawayh (d. 329 AH), *al-Imāmah wa’t-Tabṣirah*, p. 47, Ḥ. 29. (3) Al-Maghribī (d. 363 AH), *Da’ā’im al-Islām*, pp. 35, 37. (4) Aṣ-Ṣadūq (d. 381 AH), *al-Khiṣāl*, pp. 403, 550. (5) At-Tūsī (d. 460 AH), *al-Amālī*, Ḥ. 438, 482, 783.

For more details, refer to the exegesis of the holy verse involved in the following reference books of *tafsīr*: (1) At-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (2) Al-Jassās (d. 370 AH), *Ahkām al-Qur’ān*. (3) Al-Wahidī (d. 468 AH), *Aṣbāb an-Nuzūl*. (4) Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597 AH), *Zād al-Maṣīr*. (5) Al-Qurtubī (d. 671 AH), *al-Jāmi‘ li-Ahkām al-Qur’ān*. (6) Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (7) Ath-Thālibī (d. 825 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (8) As-Suyūtī (d. 911 AH), *ad-Durr al-Manthūr*. (9) Ash-Shawkanī (d. 1250 AH), *Fath al-Qadīr*. (10) Al-‘Ayyāshī (d. 320 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (11) Al-Qummī (d. 329 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*. (12) Furt al-Kūfī (d. 352 AH), *Book of Tafsīr*; in the margin of the exegesis of verse 4:59. (13) At-Tabrisī (d. 560 AH), *Majma‘ al-Bayān*, as well as many other reference books of *hadīth* and *tafsīr*.

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ :
 إِنِّي تَارِكٌ فِيهِمُ التَّقْلِينَ: كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَعَرْتَتِي أَهْلَ بَيْتِي، مَا
 إِنْ تَمَسَّكُمْ بِهِمَا لَنْ تَضْلُلُوا بَعْدِي أَبَدًا، وَإِنَّهُمَا لَنْ يَفْتَرِقاَ
 حَتَّىٰ يَرِدَا عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ.

The Messenger of Allah (ṣ) said:

“Verily, I am leaving among you two precious things [Thaqalayn]: The Book of Allah and my progeny [‘Itrah], the members of my Household [Ahlu al-Bayt]. If you hold fast to them, you shall never go astray. These two will never separate from each other until they meet me at the Pond [hawd] (of Kawthar).”

Some references:

Al-Ḥākim an-Nayshābūrī, *Al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣahīhayn* (Beirut), vol. 3, pp. 109-110, 148, 533

Muslim, *Al-Ṣahīh*, (English translation), book 31, *hadīths* 5920-3

At-Tirmidhī, *Al-Ṣahīh*, vol. 5, pp. 621-2, *hadīths* 3786, 3788; vol. 2, p. 219

An-Nassā’ī, *Khaṣā’is ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib*, *hadīth* 79

Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbāl, *Al-Muṣnad*, vol. 3, pp. 14, 17, 26; vol. 3, pp. 26, 59; vol. 4, p. 371; vol. 5, pp. 181-182, 189-190

Ibn al-Aṭīr, *Jāmi‘ al-Uṣūl*, vol. 1, p. 277

Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa ’n-Nihāyah*, vol. 5, p. 209

Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, vol. 6, p. 199

Nāṣir ad-Dīn al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth aṣ-ṣahīhah* (Kuwait: Ad-Dar as-Salafiyah), vol. 4, pp. 355-358

PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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CONTENTS

Foreword—17

Preface—19

Part 1: Definition of Religion—21

Chapter 1: Methodological Introduction to the Definition of Religion—23

Introduction—23

The Necessity of Discussing the Definition of Religion—23

[position—23]

The Purpose behind Definition and Its Kinds—25

The Logical Conditions for a Methodical Definition—27

Causes of Defects and Shortcomings in Definition—28

Obstacles and Difficulties in Defining Religion—34

Classification of the Definitions of Religion—39

Chapter 2: Common Definitions of Religion—41

Introduction—41

Metaphysical Definitions of Religion—41

Assessment—41

Aston’s Definition—43

Assessment—44

Sharī‘atī’s Definition—48

Geisler’s Definition—55

Assessment—56

Chapter 3: Essentialist Definitions of Religion—59

Introduction—59

Spencer’s Definition—59

Assessment—59

Another Definition of Religion Similar to Spencer’s—61

Assessment—61

Max Müller’s Definition—63

Assessment—64

Definition of Religion as a Set of Beliefs, Moral Codes and Rules—64
Bonheoffer's Definition—65
Assessment—65
Ellis' Definition—65
Assessment—65
Spengler's Definition—66
Bursur Shatul and Tylor's Definition—67
D'Holbach's Definition—67
Assessment—67
Santayana's Definition—68
Assessment—69
Otto's Definition—69
Assessment—69
Cassirer's Definition—70
Assessment—70
Sartre's Definition—72
Assessment—72
Dewey's Definition—73
Assessment—74
Oxford Dictionary—75
Assessment—75
Jastrow's Definition—76
Assessment—76
<i>Chapter 4: Psychological and Sociological Definitions of Religion—77</i>
Introduction—77
Psychological Definitions of Religion—77
William James' Definition—77
Assessment—79
Carl Gustav Jung's Definition—83
Assessment—85
Herder's Definition—85
Assessment—85
Schleiermacher's Definition—87
Assessment—87

Feuerbach's Definition—88
Assessment—88
Kaufmann's Definition—88
Assessment—89
Samuel King's Definition—90
Assessment—90
Goldziher's Definition—91
Assessment—91
Rainach's Definition—91
Assessment—91
Rupele's Definition—92
Assessment—92
Frazer's Definition—92
Assessment—92
Koestenbaum's Definition—93
Assessment—93
Freud's Definition—93
Assessment—93
Bultmann—95
Assessment—95
Sociological Definitions of Religion—95
Durkheim's Definition—96
Assessment—96
Feaver's Definition—97
Assessment—98
Jefferson's Definition—99
Assessment—99

Chapter 5: Utilitarian and Moralist Definitions of Religion—101

Introduction—101
Utilitarian Definition of Religion—101
Karl Barth's Definition—101
Assessment—101
Ritschl's Definition—102
Assessment—102

Tillich's Definition—102
Assessment—103
Moralist Definition of Religion—104
Everett Dean Martin's Definition—104
Assessment—104
Kant's Definition—104
Assessment—105
Whitehead's Definition—106
Assessment—106
Paul Johnson's Definition—106
Assessment—107

Part 2: Scope of Religion—109

Chapter 1: Reason behind the Need for Religion—111

Chapter 2: Scope of Jurisprudence—119

Man's Relationship with Himself—119
Second Pillar: The Need for Self-building—123
Man's Relationship with God—126
Laws in the Realm of Man's Relationship with God—128
Man's Relationship with the Universe—128
Man's Relationship with the Universe as It is—128
Man's Relationship with the Universe as It Should be—131
Man's Relationship with Fellow Human Beings—131
Salient Features of Islamic Jurisprudence—136
Types of General Rules Based on Principal Sources—145
The Role of Islamic Jurisprudence in Organizing Rational Life—148
The Functional Scope of Islamic Jurisprudence—150
Real and Superficial Needs—150
Jurisprudential Rules are Intrinsic and Rational—151
Examples of General Rules—153
Examples of Particular Rules—162
Openness or Rigidity of the Islamic Legal and Jurisprudential System—170

Chapter 3: Questions and Answers on the Scope of Religion—173

Part 3: An Examination and Analysis of Secularism—217***Chapter 1: Secularism and Proclivity to It—219***

- Definitions of Secularism, Atheism and Laicism—219
Is Secularism Innate in the Political Philosophy of Aristotle?—220
A Glance at the Conflict between the Church and the State—223
The Roman Catholic Church—225
The Clash between Kings and Popes—226
The Separation of Church and State—226
Three Events that Paved the Ground for Secular Thinking—228

Chapter 2: The Reason for the Emergence of Secular Thinking in the West—231

- The Unity and Harmony of all Aspects of Human Life in Islam—235

Chapter 3: The Consequences of Secularism—237

- Two Seemingly Contradictory Views of ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khaldūn on the Need of the Prophets of God for Man’s Mundane Life—237
Secularism Leads to Personality Disorder in Human Management—238
Managing the First Dimension (Animalistic Life)—238
Managing the Second Dimension (Life with Thematic Principles and Laws)—239
Human Being in the Third Dimension—239
Human Being in the Fourth Dimension (Rational Life)—244
Values being extinguished after their removal from the lives of people—247

Chapter 4: Islam and Secularism—259

- A Survey of Some Muslim Writings on Political Issues—259
Examples of General Rules and Particular Rules have been given in detail on pages 134 to 156—275
Hākimiyah and Ḥukm in the Qur’ān—275
Qur’ānic Verses which Contain the Word Ḥukm and Some of Its Derivatives—276
Reasons behind the Confusion in the Concepts of Ḥukm and Ḥukūmah in the Minds of the Rulers and the Subjects—281

Chapter 5: The Relationship of Governance and Politics with Divine Laws—285

- Are government and politics outside the realm of divine duties and

laws?—285

The Democratic System in Life, Government and Politics, and Its Inherent Problems—289

Part 4: Science and Religion—299

Chapter 1: The Relationship of Science, Philosophy and Religion with Rational Life—301

Science, Religion and Philosophy, the Three Main Elements of Man's Rational Life—301

What is Rational Life?—302

The Salient Features of Rational Life—304

Conclusion—309

What is Wisdom?—310

Chapter 2: The Definition of Science and Its Salient Features—313

What is Science?—313

Conditions of a Scientific Law—313

First Condition: Universality of the Law—313

Basis of the Universality of Scientific Propositions—313

Generalization of a Scientific View—314

Second Condition: Predictability—316

Third Condition: Falsifiability—316

Fourth Condition: Repeatable and Duplicable—317

Is It Science or Chicanery?—323

Chapter 3: Stability and Change in Science and Religion—327

Q. Can stability and change in science and religion mean the same?—327

Chapter 4: The Relationship of Science and Philosophy with Metaphysics—335

The Views of Some Ancient Philosophers on the Essential Reality of Things—337

In the Words of Einstein—365

Chapter 5: Views on Essential Reality—371

Views of Eastern and Western Scholars on the Essential Reality of Existents—371

The Main Views of Philosophers and Scholars on the Essential Reality of Things—372

Chapter 6: The Limits of Science in Knowing the Reality—385

Opinion-survey for Identifying the Reality in the Realm of Science—
385

Declaration of the Bankruptcy of Science—387

Limitations in Methodology and Objective—389

Five Reasons behind the Necessity and Greatness of Science—395

The Effect of Preconceived Principles in Scientific Conclusions—430

1. Correct principles and perceptions established by sciences,
philosophies, axiomatic propositions, and essential propositions—431

2. Incorrect principles and perceptions that cannot be established by
acceptable proofs—432

3. Principles and perceptions whose validity or invalidity cannot be
established—436

4. Propositions with both correct and incorrect properties—437

5. A Priori Principles can even Influence Natural Science and
Philosophical Findings—438

Part 5: Religious Pluralism—441***Chapter 1: Questions and Answers on the Scope of Religion—443***

Index—457

Transliteration Symbols

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
ء	,	أ	a
ب	b	ت	t
ث	th	ج	j
ح	h	خ	kh
د	d	ذ	dh
ر	r	ز	z
س	s	ش	sh
ص	¥	ض	¤
ط	t	ظ	..
ع	‘	غ	gh
ف	f	ق	q
ك	k	ل	l
م	m	ن	n
هـ	h	و	w
يـ	y	ة	ah
<u>Long Vowels</u>		<u>Short Vowels</u>	
آ	ā	ـ	a
و	ū	ـ	u
يـ	ī	ـ	i
<i>Persian Letters</i>			
<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>	<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Transliteration</u>
پـ	p	چـ	ch
ژـ	zh	گـ	g

Foreword



The precious legacy left behind by the Holy Prophet's Household (*Ahl al-Bayt*; may peace be upon them all) and their followers' preservation of this legacy from the menace of extinction is a perfect example of an all-encompassing school (*maktab*), which embraces the different branches of the Islamic knowledge and has been able to train many of the talented personalities by quenching them with this gushing-forth fountain. This school has presented scholars to the Muslim *ummah* who, by following the Holy Prophet's Household ('a),¹ have occupied the station of clarifying the doubts and skepticisms brought forth by the various creeds and intellectual currents both inside and outside the Muslim society, and throughout the past centuries, they have been the presenters of the firmest answers and solutions to these doubts.

Anchored in the responsibilities it is shouldering, the *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a) World Assembly has embarked upon defending the sanctity of *risālah* (apostleship) and its authentic beliefs—truths which have always been opposed by the chiefs and leaders of the anti-Islamic sects, religions and trends. In this sacred path, the Assembly regards itself as a follower of the upright pupils of the *Ahl al-Bayt*'s ('a) school—those who have always been ready to refute those accusations and calumnies and have tried to be always in the frontline of this struggle on the basis of the expediencies of time and space.

The experiences in this field, which have been preserved in the books of the scholars of the *Ahl al-Bayt*'s ('a) school, are unique in their own right. It is because these experiences have been based upon knowledge ('ilm) and the preeminence of intellect and reasoning, and at the same time, devoid of any iota of blind prejudices as well as whims and caprices. These experiences address the experts, scholars and thinkers in such a manner that is acceptable to a healthy mind and the pure human natural disposition (*fitrah*).

In a bid to assist those who are in quest of truth, the *Ahl al-Bayt* ('a) World

¹ The abbreviation, “‘a” stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, ‘alayhi’s-salām, ‘alayhim’us-salām, or ‘alayhī’s-salām (may peace be upon him/them/her), which is mentioned after the names of the prophets, angels, Imāms from the Prophet’s progeny, and saints ('a). [Trans.]

Assembly has endeavored to enter the new phase of these worthy experiences within the framework of research and writing works of the contemporary Shī‘ah writers or those who, through the divine guidance, embraced this noble school.

This Assembly is also engaged in the study and publication of the valuable works of the pious predecessors and outstanding Shī‘ah personalities so that those who are thirsty of truth could quench their thirst from this refreshing fountain by listening and embracing this truth, which the Holy Prophet’s Household (‘a) has offered as gift to the entire world.

It is hoped that the dear readers would not deprive the *Ahl al-Bayt* (‘a) World Assembly of their valuable views and suggestions as well as constructive criticisms in this arena.

We also do invite the scholars, translators and other institutions to assist us in propagating the pure Muhammadian (ṣ)¹ Islam.

We ask God, the Exalted, to accept this ntrivial effort and enhance it further under the auspices of His vicegerent on earth, Ḥadrat al-Mahdī (may Allah, the Exalted, expedite his glorious advent).

It is appropriate here to express our utmost gratitude to the late ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Taqī Ja‘farī for writing the book,² and to Dr. Mansoor Limba for translating it, as well as to all our honorable colleagues in accomplishing this task especially the dear ones in the Translation Office for performing their responsibility.

*Cultural Affairs Department
Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) World Assembly*

¹. The abbreviation, “ṣ”, stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, *ṣallallāhu ‘alayhi wa ălihi wa sallam* (may God’s blessings and peace be upon him and his progeny), which is mentioned after the name of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). [Trans.]

². ‘Allāmah Muḥammad Taqī Ja‘farī, *Falsafeh-ye Dīn*, 3rd ed. (Tehran: Institute of Islamic Culture and Thought, 1386 AHS (2007)), 596 pages.

Preface

The present book consists of five parts of ‘Allāmah Muhammad Taqī Ja‘farī’s discourses on the study of religion. This work is an edited form of his treatise on the philosophy of religion, as the first series of discussions on it as proposed and then published by the Institute of Islamic Culture and Thought in 1375 AHS (circa 1996). However, some of the subjects are published for the first time in a book form, so, it is worthwhile to mention briefly the manner of its compilation.

After a series of consultation with the late ‘Allāmah, it was decided to accelerate the work of some fellow researchers in the Institute by asking questions concerning the disputes on the philosophy of religion instead of the ‘Allāmah writing papers on it. At the outset, definitions of religion from various books were presented to the author. The transcription of the discussions held with the ‘Allāmah was presented to him for review. Esteemed brother Dr. Qarāmalikī arranged and compiled the whole of the ‘Allāmah’s discourses, and at the same time, enriched them by including some of his own explanations. He has also presented his course of action in the introduction. After completion of the work, I proofread and corrected some parts which were to be published then as “the definition of religion”.

The second part is related to the scope of religion. Respected brother Mr. Muhammad Ridā Asadī took the responsibility of formulating the relevant questions and arranging its contents. This part was first published in 1378 AHS (circa 1999) by the Institute. For the revised edition of the book, he gave me a copy of the headings not published earlier. Mr. Asadī’s added marginalia to the ‘Allāmah’s discourses contributed in understanding the subjects better.

The third part of the book is related to the relationship of religion and politics, which is titled “Secularism”. This was first published in volume 25 of *Tarjumeh wa Sharh-e Nahj al-Balāghah* [by the ‘Allāmah] and is presented here with modified headings.

The fourth part pertains to the relationship of science and religion for which the ‘Allāmah preferred the heading “Science, Religion and Philosophy” as the “Three Main Elements of Rational Human Life.” In this work the author has stated important points about the relationship of science and religion, science and philosophy with metaphysics, and the limits of science in

knowing reality. When the ‘Allāmah was still alive, this work was published in several issues of the newspaper, *Ittilā‘at*. The non-availability of the author’s manuscript and the errors in the existing text caused enormous difficulties in arranging and publishing it. Finally, its encoded copy with new headings is presented here.

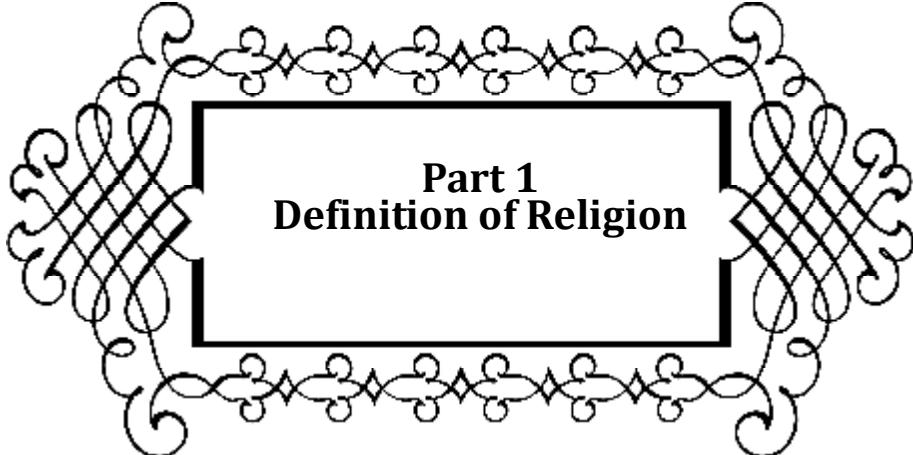
The last part of this volume is a set of questions and answers about pluralism, first published in the 7-8 issue of the journal, *Naqd wa Nazar*. Since this issue is related to the philosophy of religion, it is also included in this volume.

It is noteworthy that the undersigned edited the abovementioned parts of the book, particularly Parts 1, 3 and 4, while taking into account the writing style of the author, and to a certain extent this edited version has simplified the intricacies in the text. No doubt, if the late thinker were alive, he would have presented this work in a perfect form.

Wa ’s-salām,

‘Abd Allāh Naṣrī

[Editor]



Part 1
Definition of Religion

Editor's Introduction

The discourse on the definition of religion includes the following steps: At the outset, there is a methodological introduction to the possibility of a definition in the various fields of social sciences and humanities, in general, and the study of religion, in particular, elucidated and elaborated by the editor. He has also appended some methodological questions to it. The ‘Allāmah wrote concise replies to pertinent questions.

After the methodological introduction, it was agreed that leading definitions of religion in principal sources and a brief analysis of the key concepts in the intellectual framework of the scholars that defined religion be presented, so that the ‘Allāmah could systematically assess those definitions according to his epistemological framework. This decision was not implemented except in two cases, viz. the definitions of James and Jung who were among the prominent and macro-theoretician psychologists in the modern study of religion, and then, due to the passing away of the ‘Allāmah, it was not continued. Many other definitions were explored by researchers of the Institute of Islamic Culture and Thought and the ‘Allāmah was able to cite and analyze them. For the sake of faithfulness to the original text, there is no modification of any sort in the ‘Allāmah’s expressions which are also identified as such.

Chapter 1

Methodological Introduction to the Definition of Religion

Introduction

Some logical-methodological discussions are required to learn the nature of religion:

- Defining religion
- Assessing the purpose of a definition and its kinds
- Ensuring the logical conditions for a methodical definition
- Analysing the causes of defects in a definition
- Realising the difficulties in defining religion
- Classifying the definitions of religion

The Necessity of Discussing the Definition of Religion

A common principle is to give a clear and categorical definition of the subject, which identifies its issues to a great extent. Thereafter, the researchers commence to clarify the definition.

Iposition¹

In order to know the fields of science,² Muslim logicians have arranged the issues in every science according to six main questions, classifying them according to the following logical order:

1. Conceptual analysis (stating the “what” – explanation of the name);
2. Question about existence and emergence (stating the “simple eligibility”);
3. Analysis of the essence (real “what”);
4. Question about the quality, properties and rules (stating the “compound eligibility”);

¹. The introduction to the discourses and parts of the text under the heading “Exposition” in brackets are those of Dr. Qarāmaliki.

². Knowing the fields of science is one of the significant topics dealt by Muslim scholars. They have four main approaches in epistemology.

5. Question about the cause of emergence (demonstrative *lam*); and
6. Question about the reason for emergence (affirmative *lam*).

In every field of knowledge, systematic inquiry must observe the logical sequence of subjects. Thus, before dealing with the properties, effects and rules of every matter and even before embarking on the affirmation and negation of a matter, one must obtain its clear and distinct definition. Without it, serious differences in the analysis of issues emerge. For this reason, one cannot embark on its affirmation or negation without a clear mental picture of it, and in the realm of rules, one cannot talk about its properties and effects.

The origin of inclination towards religion and its impact is one of the important debates in the various branches of the study of religion such as, the psychology of religion, the sociology of religion, the history of religions, the philosophy of religion, theology, and modern scholasticism. No doubt, one of the reasons behind the emergence of diverse and contradictory views in analyzing these two matters is the absence of a clear and unified definition of religion. An acceptable definition will clarify whether contradictory views pertain to a single subject or not.

If two mutually discordant theories on the effect of religiosity stem from two different perceptions of religion, they are not mutually discordant and the relationship between them is an amphibology of contradiction, and not real contradiction.

The Muslim logicians' emphasis on the primacy of definition of the subject as a [guiding] principle in every debate or dispute has been much welcomed today by analytic philosophers. The analytic philosophers' maxim "Explain the perceptions first and clarify the meaning of concepts embedded in the claim so that we can subsequently talk about the validity or invalidity of the claim," emphasises the logical primacy of definition over other subjects.

In essence, the requisite for dealing with a subject is its clear and common definition. For instance, as long as there is unclear, unambiguous, distinct definition of fatalism (*jabr*) and freewill (*ikhtiyār*), one cannot discuss this issue. It often happens that a scholar engages in refuting freewill and another brings proof to affirm it, and yet a third thinker regards it as impossible to negate or affirm. In spite of the amphibology of contradiction among these three views, the mutually discordant perceptions about freewill, there is no

real contradiction among their viewpoints because they do not have a single and identical object of study.

Therefore, before commencing discussions on the philosophy of religion and the enormous disputes, it is necessary to deal with its definition by examining and assessing the definitions being presented. Whenever a question about the relationship between religion and freedom, religion and ideology, religion and art, and religion and development is raised, it must be asked, "What is meant by 'religion'?" When there is talk about the exclusivity, universality or pluralism of religion, it must be asked, "What is the theoreticians' view about religion?" This is because without presenting a clear definition, the discussion will be deceptive and erroneous and the fallacy of common expression will always be committed. To present a definition, particularly in relation to multidimensional and intricate phenomena, is very difficult. However, the difficulty in defining cannot be a reason for us to refrain from offering a definition, thus leaving the audience in ambiguity and confusion.]

The Purpose behind Definition and Its Kinds

That which is affirmed in logic and philosophy and is the utmost aspiration of prominent scholars is to offer the most comprehensive definition ever possible. The definition that comprehensively identifies a subject with its real segments and approximate kind explains the essence of the *mu'arrif* (the defined subject).

And since, for certain reasons, it is impossible for our knowledge to interfere in the essence of things, the definition must be approximate to the essence with such peculiarities so as to encompass all aspects of the subject being defined and to reject whatever is outside the identity of the subject.

[Exposition: The kinds of definition are mutually correlated with their objective and what is expected from presenting them. Thus, the purpose behind the definition is briefly stated. That which is expected from every definition is, first of all, to distinguish that matter from other matters. To establish the described one (*mu'arrif*) as a concept and the meaning of other concepts is the main purpose behind a definition.¹

¹. The phrase "main purpose" implies the existence of other purposes specifically highlighted by modern logicians; for example, increase of vocabulary; prevention of linguistic ambiguities; clarity of the scope of application of the term; and impact on behaviors. In this regard, see Irving M. Copi, *Introduction to Logic* (New York:

Differentiation is of two types: (1) essential differentiation or conceptual differentiation, and (2) accidental differentiation or differentiation in particulars and properties. That which shows essential differentiation is called “definition” and that which presents accidental differentiation is called “description”. If the definition is such that all the essentials embedded in the described thing are included, it is called “comprehensive definition”. Although comprehensive definition is the most credible one ever possible for the identification of a matter, to obtain it is either difficult or impossible because it is not easy to identify all the essentials of a thing. Therefore, non-comprehensive definitions are sufficient for the majority.

Non-comprehensive definitions are varied—linear and accidental variations. Linear variation refers to the various definitions which are not of the same level, such as definition of meaning, definition by example, definition by the negation of contradiction, definition of properties, as well as lexical, stipulative, ostensive, abstractive and recursive definitions.¹

Accidental variation refers to the various definitions of the same kind, such as many descriptions of a single matter. This variation stems from the multiplicity of apparent properties and particulars.

Variation in definition stems from the variation in the objectives and expectations meant in the definition. Sometimes, the purpose is merely suggestive of a meaning’s association with a certain word. In this case, a stipulative definition is to be presented. There is a time when the purpose is to determine the scope [of meaning] of the expression and to mention examples to which the concept correctly applies. In this case, ostensive definition is used. At times, the intention is to define the particulars of the differentiator. In this case, specifying definition or “description” is presented.

One instance of error in defining is its inappropriate use, i.e. presenting a stipulative definition but claiming that its aim is to describe the differentiator. It must be stated what type of definition is being given and

McMillan Publishing Co., 1982).

¹ For information on the linear variation of definition according to the modern logicians, see Muwahhid Ḏiyā’, *Wizhenāmeh-ye Tawsīfi-ye Mantiq* (Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies, 1374 AHS), pp. 27-28; Copi, *Introduction to Logic*; P. Suppes, *Introduction to Logic* (New Jersey, 1957); Richard Robinson, *Definition* (Chford, 1972).

what is expected from it. This error is frequently committed while defining religion. A complete picture of religion cannot be drawn from a mere ostensive definition. In assessing the definitions of religion, the explanatory function of the definition must be clearly stated. Therefore, based on the point stipulated in the text,¹ we are not after an all-encompassing definition but its description. Thus, the type of the definition and the aspects of religion it means to explain must be specified.^{2]}

The Logical Conditions for a Methodical Definition

The most fundamental condition of a correct definition is comprehensiveness and inclusivity to the extent possible.

[Exposition: The diversity of definition has given rise to the notion that definition is something subjective and relative, thus talking about assessment and negation in this regard is not permissible. A definition is a methodical attempt to present a new image of a set of earlier clear images. The new image must image the thing whose nature or essence is the subject of inquiry.

As stated, every definition aims at clarifying some aspects of the thing being defined. This claim must be assessed on the basis of its strength, completeness or defect. Is the definition strong in differentiating? Is this differentiation general or does it only cover some aspects?

For this reason, in the logic of definition³ there is an endeavor to present the logical conditions and rules of definition through which the acceptable definitions can be distinguished from the inadequate ones. The stated conditions in the science of logic can be classified into two main conditions: (1) those related to the concept and those related to the applicability.

¹. It refers to the expression of the ‘Allāmah, thus: “For certain reasons, it is impossible for our knowledge to interfere in the nature of things.” In this regard, see ‘Ali ibn Sīnā, *Risālat al-Hudūd*, pp. 74-75; Shaykh al-Tūsī, *Asās al-Iqtibās*, pp. 441-442.

². Similar error in this kind of definition is among the debatable errors in giving definition.

³. It refers to a branch of logic, which deals with the nature of definition, its kinds and the logical rules and conditions of each of the types of definition. In the Aristotelian logic, this part of Avicennian logic is drawn up as a distinct part. See Farāmarz Qarāmālī, “Al-Ishārāt wa ’l-Tanbihāt: Sarīghiz-e Mantiq-e Dū Bakhshī,” *āyineh-ye Pazhūhesh*, p. 24.

Definition has at least two basic conditions: (1) conceptual clarity and (2) functional conformity. Firstly, the definition must be totally clear. Ambiguous definitions are inadequate as they do not offer any definite knowledge and clear image. Secondly, the definition must be such that the limit (*hadd*) or indicator (*mu 'arrif*) conforms exactly to the limited (*mahdūd*) or indicated one (*mu 'arraf*). That is, the totality of manifestations of the indicator and the indicated must be the same. Most logical conditions of definition are traceable to these two conditions.¹

The definition of man as “a complex machine” is an example of inadequate definition, as it lacks conceptual clarity and functional conformity. This is because the meaning of “complex” is ambiguous and thus complex! It does not give a clear picture of the issue. Besides, it is not in conformity with all individuals, for the totality of applications of man with a complex machine is contradictory.

Causes of Defects and Shortcomings in Definition

The causes of shortcomings in definitions that lead to the lack of the abovementioned conditions are many:

[*Exposition*: Defining follows certain logical rules. Neglect of observing these rules gives rise to a defect in the definition. Causes of defect in a definition are of two types: (1) factors that cause ambiguity in the definition and (2) factors that lead to incompatibility between the manifestations of the indicator and the indicated. Apart from these two factors that are lexically, conceptually or functionally related to the definition itself, there are other factors which are connected to things other than the definition.

1. Linguistic factors: Ambiguity in the definition can be caused by linguistic factors, as explained below:]

The first factor is the entry of concepts unrelated to the subject. For example, in defining “wise” the phrase “beautiful voice” also becomes part of the definition! And in defining “water” a beautiful container in which it is kept is also taken as part of the definition.

[*Exposition*: One of the most important instances of ambiguity in definition, in the jargon of the logicians, is the excess of the limit (*hadd*) compared to

¹. In the words of Hakim Sabziwārī,

the limited one (*mahdūd*). The inclusion of anything alien to the thing being defined leads to ambiguity in the definition. In order to avoid the emergence of such ambiguity, logicians have pointed out that the ideal definition is that which is clear and lucid and at the same time parsimonious in concepts. Description and explanation are different from definition. In explanations, many rules, and particulars of a thing can be stated, while in defining, only its nature must be shown.]

The second factor refers to verbal disputes. A famous example was that of a Turk, a Persian and an Arab who wanted to eat something together. They had a dispute on what they would eat. The Turk said, “For today’s lunch, I want to eat *uzum* (“grape” in Turkish). The Persian said, “What is *uzum*? We must eat *angūr* (“grape” in Persian) today.” The Arab said, “I want neither *uzum* nor *anggūr*. The best food [for today] is ‘inab (عنب) (“grape” in Arabic).” Someone who was familiar with the three languages entered the scene of a baseless dispute and said, “Give me the money so that I can buy and bring whatever food each of you wants.” He brought grapes for all of them, and realized the baseless dispute caused by their ignorance of the other two languages.¹

[Exposition: One of the logical conditions of definition is to avoid using unfamiliar or uncommon words. Clear and accurate language is the most important condition of definition,² since unfamiliar words give rise to verbal dispute.

There are other linguistic causes of defect in a definition which can be briefly pointed out below:

- “Definition by concealing” or defining by using concepts which are more complex and ambiguous than the one to be defined;
- “Definition by distancing” or defining by using a concept for whose clarity it needs the words to be defined; and
- Using potential proof, common word, metaphor, allegory, and any expression which causes ambiguity in conveying the intended

¹. *Mathnawi-ye Ma’navi*, Book 2, Ramadānī Manuscript, p. 134, line 46.

See Reynold A. Nicholson (trans.), *The Mathnawī of Jalālu’ddīn Rūmī* (Tehran: Soad Publisher, 2002), Book 2, pp. 187, 189. [Trans.]

². ‘Alī ibn Sinā, *Al-Ishārāt wa ’l-Tanbihāt*, ed. Mahmūd Shabānī (Tehran: University of Tehran, 1339 AHS), p. 35.

meaning.

اشتراك لفظ دائم رهزن است اشتراك گبر و مؤمن در تن است

A word with several meanings always obstructs (the understanding): the similarity between the infidel with the true believer is in the body (alone).¹

Most of the errors in definition are rooted in psychological and personal factors, which impel a person to adopt defective definitions. Among these factors are the following:]

The third factor is the prior principle which interferes in the definition. An example is the definition of man as a fierce creature, which is rooted in the way of thinking of Hobbes² and his likes, and which inspired him to say that “Man is a wolf to [his fellow] man.”³

[Exposition: Every person is influenced by his learning and presumptions. However, a dogmatic attitude toward abstract and concrete things controlled by the framework of one’s views is erroneous. Many examples of this type of error in the analysis of religious matters like “religious experience” by Freud,⁴ Marx⁵ and others can be seen. According to Jung,⁶ in all his

¹. Reynold A. Nicholson (trans.), *The Mathnawi of Jalālu’ddīn Rūmī* (Tehran: Soad Publisher, 2002), Book 6, line 649, p. 75. [Trans.]

². Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679): English political philosopher, who sought to apply rational principles to the study of human nature. In Hobbes’ view, humans are materialistic and pessimistic, their actions motivated solely by self-interest, thus a state’s stability can only be guaranteed by a sovereign authority to which citizens relinquish their rights. *Leviathan* (1651), his most celebrated work, expresses these views. [Trans.]

³. See the dedication to his work *De cive* (1651). [Trans.]

⁴. Sigmund Freud (1856-1940): The founder of psychoanalysis who founded the International Psychoanalytical Association in 1910 and whose view on psychoanalysis was reached through his study of the effect of hypnosis on hysteria. Among his numerous and well-known works are *The Interpretations of Dream*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, *Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis*, *Humor and Its Relation to the Unconscious*, *The Ego and the Id*, *The Problem of Anxiety*, and *The Future of an Illusion*. [Trans.]

⁵. Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-83): a German philosopher, political economist, historian, political theorist, sociologist, and communist revolutionary, whose ideas played a significant role in the development of modern communism and socialism. [Trans.]

⁶. Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961): a Swiss psychiatrist, an influential thinker and the

definitions, Freud was a prisoner of the theory of the unconscious and he would see everything within that framework.^{1]}]

The fourth factor is the justification of a definition with scientific intents in a branch of science, such as the definition of the “earth” with an agricultural intent, which is different from the definition of the earth with a civil engineering intent.

جز همان چیزی که می خواهد ندید طالب هر چیز ای رشید

*O enlightened friend! He who seeks everything
Cannot see anything except what he wants.²*

[Exposition: The selective nature of studies prevalent in empirical sciences causes every scientist to look within his own framework and thus, to know [only] a particular dimension of the thing. This methodological exclusivism became prevalent particularly with the emergence of modern science and positivism, and its outcome was the new error of [focusing on] an aspect of a thing instead of its nature, or what is called today as “insignificant error”. An interdisciplinary study, which is a sort of methodological pluralism, is the way of correcting this error. Methodological exclusivism has other dimensions explained under the fifth factor of defect in definition.]

The fifth factor is difference in the facts, skill, and experience in scientific subjects and problems. An example is the difference of opinion between a classical physicist who would define matter as “a body which occupies space”, and a modern physicist who is engrossed in quantum mechanics.

[Exposition

The difference of perspectives that leads to the difference in definition is of two types. [One is] the accidental difference like the one stated in the fourth factor. The difference of perspectives between the physicists and the chemists in analyzing a single phenomenon gives rise to the difference in opinions. The other difference is traced to the linear difference on the multiple levels of reality. Every person defines a thing according to the extent of his or her experience. In conventional or common experience,

founder of analytical psychology. [Trans.]

¹ Farāmarz Qarimalikī, “*Tahlīl-e Farāsū-ye Rawānshinākhtī-ye Freud az Dīn*,” *Qabasāt*, Issue 3.

² *Mahnawī-ye Ma‘nawī*, Book 4, Ramadānī Manuscript, p. 253, line 33.

nature has an independent existence, and in another experience, the nature of its connections can be shown.]

The sixth factor consists of the effects that give rise to sensitivity or mirth on the subject being defined. Similar to the rejection of religion because of witnessing its abuse is the sensitivity about pure science which usually results in individual sensitivities, thereby depriving the person of attaining the truth of the matter. Anger and carnal desire disrupt the psychological balance, thus depriving the person of knowing the real nature of things.

خشم و شهوت مرد را احول کند
از استقامت روح را مبدل کند

*Anger and carnal desire makes a man squint-eyed,
Transforming the soul from [its] resistance.*

Reliable traditions have also pointed to this truth:

حُبُّ أَلْشَى يُعْمِي وَيُضْمِمْ

“Love for something makes one blind and deaf.”

Those who deal with realities from specific psychological perspectives will miss the [true] nature of those realities. People, like Freud, who consider religion as superstitious can never arrive at a correct definition of religion, because the requisite of knowing the truth of a thing is not to have any opinion about it. When contumacy or enmity influences a thing negatively, he will not arrive at anything except at what he wants.

The seventh factor is ignorance or insufficient knowledge about the cause of a thing. Regarding the definitions of religion being stated, we can see a lot of instances of this factor.¹

The eighth factor is paying attention to only some aspects of a thing. As much as possible, all levels, dimensions and elements of the thing must be taken into account, and not only one or two dimensions. This appeared after religion was separated from mundane life and secular ideas (negation of religion from life) prevailed in the West.

As will be shown in this research, most of these definitions of religion have presented an obscure background of one or some limited aspects of religion, juxtaposing it against science, wisdom, philosophy, politics, and civilization. For this reason, this sort of definition lacks academic value and should never

¹. In reality, this factor can be identified with the fifth.

be taken as the criterion for affirming or negating religion.

Regrettably, after learning mechanical theories on all realities of the world including man and nature, the same defective and sketchy definitions have transformed all social sciences and humanities under the pretext of knowing and manufacturing amenities of life by following mechanical laws, such that today we can say that only very few things are defined by considering their real nature. For instance, we can briefly cite the following examples:

1. In view of the existence of the human mind or psyche, the correct definition of freedom is supposedly like this: "Freedom means supervision and control over the positive and negative sides of an action." The contrary definition is a notion similar to this: "Freedom means the ability of man to do or not to do a thing", which is a very simplistic and common notion about freedom. We know that in understanding the real meaning of freedom with the correct definition, we must also take into consideration two stages of freedom—before and after it. The stage prior to freedom refers to "emancipation" which only removes the shackles of oppression. The stage of acquisition refers to freewill which values freedom.
2. If we want to find the definition of politics in its prevalent meaning today, we will see that its common definition is the administration of society's affairs according to the politician's power, taste and goal. However, the real definition of politics is the due administration of human lives by activating the positive talents of society's members for the attainment of material and spiritual felicity.

[Exposition]: The definition's inclusion of all dimensions of the thing being defined (*mu'arrif*) is among the conditions of its perfection. However, intrinsic and accidental dimensions must first be differentiated, for the definition's inclusion of all dimensions and aspects of the *mu'arrif* is not possible today. Secondly, it is very difficult, nay impossible, to deal with all essential levels, dimensions and elements of the *mu'arrif* in cases in which the *mu'arrif* is a multidimensional matter or a complex phenomenon.

Most of those who have attempted to define religion admit that a perfect definition, which includes all aspects of religion, is impossible.¹ For this reason, the phrase, "as much as possible", is included in the definitions. The

¹. William James, *Din wa Rawān*, trans. Ahmadī Qā'inī (Tehran, 1362 AHS), pp.2-3.

point which is of great importance is the ‘fallacy of generalization’, as it is called in the West. In defining a thing, if a person focuses only on some dimensions of it for whatever reason, and then thinks that whatever he observes is the totality of the thing, commits the fallacy of generalization. But if it is mentioned that this definition is only true to certain cases of the *mu'arrif*, this definition—provided that there are logical rules—can be accepted as one of the descriptions. For example, in defining religion, William James¹ has done it, not what many people have done.]

Obstacles and Difficulties in Defining Religion

Religion is not easy to define. Some people have considered religion impossible to define. The problem is that in spite of the great efforts of religious scholars in the past two centuries, a comprehensive and universal definition of religion acceptable to all religions is yet to be attained.² In *The Meaning and End of Religion*, W. C. Smith³ says, “It is perhaps not presumptuous to hold that no definition of religion so far proposed has proven compelling, no generalization has come anywhere near to adequacy.”⁴

[Exposition: Is the inquiry on the definition of religion relative or futile? Can a comprehensive and clear definition of religion be proposed? An answer to these questions hinges on the clarification of certain leading methodological issues on the definition of religion:

First: Is the method of defining religion logical or empirical? In other words, must the definition be studied according to the experience and research on movements and religions, and should their common universal aspects be taken as the nature of religion? In this case and with this assumption, can we

¹. William James (1842-1910): a pioneering American psychologist and philosopher trained as a medical doctor. Among his best-known works is *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. [Trans.]

². See Norman Geister, *Philosophy of Religion* (Michigan: Ondervan Corporation Grand Rapids, 1997), p. 14.

³. Wilfred Cantwell Smith (1916-2000): a Canadian professor of comparative religion who from 1964-1973 was director of Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions. His best known and most controversial work is *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1962) in which he notably and controversially questioned the validity of the concept of religion. [Trans.]

⁴. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (New York: New American Library of World Literature, 1964), p. 16.

arrive at an identical thing, or as what John Hick¹ believes, “Perhaps a single specific feature of the different phenomena which are called ‘religion’ does not exist, but rather it is better to believe in the set of ‘family resemblances’” and take it as the indicator of religion? In empirical inquiry: What is the criterion for determining what is to be called ‘religion’? For example, for religions in which there is no room for the worship of a supreme being, such as Theravada Buddhism, the definition to be considered is the one that also includes such religions. Or, is the method of defining religion logical in the sense that it deals with so-called ‘derivative’ definitions? That is, just as a term is considered to have a certain meaning in the beginning, the same is also incorporated in its definition. Examples are the definitions based upon phenomenology, some psychological definitions (like the definition of William James), and some sociological definitions (like the definition of Parsons²).

As such, where should one begin in defining religion? Should one first present a definition with prior concepts of religion and then assess through it the authenticity of whatever is called ‘religion’, thereby distinguishing true religions from the false ones? Or, on the contrary, should one first explore whatever is called ‘religion’ and then by studying all of them, extract the special common feature as the essence of religion, or based on the theory of ‘family resemblances’, should one set forth the totality of descriptions and arrive at the definition of religion?]

In reply to this question, it is necessary to explain the logical and empirical methods. Some thinkers in recent times have stated that the logical method of definition refers to reasoning through general premises which are already proven or do not need to be proven, and to be collated with particular premises (cases and manifestations) in order to arrive at a conclusion. Take, for example, these premises: “There is a reality beyond perception.” “A whole number is either odd or even,” and “The whole is greater than the part.” This method is called reasoning based on general premises for proving particular premises.

The empirical method is the method of scrutiny, inductive reasoning and

¹. John Hick (1922-): philosopher of religion; edited *The Myth of God Incarnate*. [Trans.]

². Talcott Parsons (1902-79): an American sociologist who served on the faculty of Harvard University from 1927 to 1973. [Trans.]

experimentation of particular cases in order to arrive at a general conclusion. If we seriously and closely examine the empirical method, we will conclude that this method (meticulous and inductive) is also important. First and foremost, we begin with a general premise which is reached through particular cases and premises, and then in reasoning, the same general premise is applied to [particular] cases and premises. For instance, we conduct a research, inductive reasoning and experimentation in the form of observing animals and we see that every animal defends itself and protects its life, and it engages in reproductive activities. Out of these observations, we experience a general premise and say, "Every animal defends itself and engages in reproductive activities." Therefore, in both methods a general premise is used to arrive at the conclusion. The crux of the matter is that in the logical method the general premise is considered already proven and it does not need to be proven again, while in the empirical method the general premise is reached through observations, experiments and scrutiny of cases and manifestations and then applied to them. Some thinkers have set these two methods against each other, calling one 'logical' and the other 'empirical', which is definitely erroneous, because both methods can be considered 'logical'. In the former, the movement is from the general to the specific premise, while in the latter, the movement is from specific cases and applications from which the general premise emanated, and then the same general premise is applied to the specific. Of course, there is a difference between the two types of general premise, which is essential to know and that is, usually, when the movement begins from the general, it is universal, applicable to all cases, such as the premise that "The whole is greater than the part". This is while it is possible that due to inadequacy, the observations and experimentations on specific cases and applications do not include all cases. Thus, the logic of science demands that in this method (empirical and inductive), the level of empirical and observatory conformities must be 90%.

Second, in defining religion, its applications are very important, whether the definition emanates from them (prior empirical definition), or the definition be applied to them (already proven general premises or *a priori*). But what is the criterion for determining whether that which is called 'religion' is a real manifestation of religion or not? For which religion is our definition of religion suitable? How can a religion be devoid of the worship of a Being, and belief in a heavenly scripture be considered religion?

Obviously, not only in religion but rather in all truths, whose realization is within the domain of the inward-oriented axis and the outward-oriented axis, observation, examination and inquiry on outward manifestations and cases are as important as inward perception and conception; like, beauty, justice, sense of right and wrong, love, subconscious affections, and the like.

Another issue needing close attention is: “What is the criterion for determining whether that which is called ‘religion’ is a real manifestation of religion or not?”

A more general meaning which we can take into consideration is that “Religion means taking a step beyond the self and believing that above the bestial selfishness and common natural demands, there are truths which must be aspired for as the lofty aim in life, such as ‘nirvana’ in Buddhism, and similar things in other religions. For this reason, this truth has a certain sort of sanctity and luminosity, and movement toward its attainment gives pleasure and delight to the believing person, thus saving him or her from a sense of futility or absurdity. Obviously, the phenomenon stems from a sublime reckoning in life that encompasses a salient feature of religion, although by setting aside God Almighty with all [His] Sublime Attributes mentioned in formal religions, it cannot include all aspects of religion.

Third, should the definition of religion be sought from religion itself, or does it belong to realities outside religion? Is the correct way of attaining the truth of religion by referring to revelation and religious texts, or to tools and methods outside religion; such as, empirical or logical methods? Or, is there basically no separation between these two methods, and “either outside religion or within religion is only superficial”? In reply to this question, we must distinguish two things from each other.

The first is the nature of religion, in addition to its special features, properties, tools, and methods.

The second is to prove the necessity of following religion, which involves desirable acceptance, and a claim can never be proven. However, to prove whether the tools and methods of religion are outside religion or within it, depends on whether these are religious in nature, or conventional and rational. If they are of a religious type, such as the conditionality of ablution (*wudū'*) and the purity of the body and clothes in the ritual prayer (*salāt*) and the attainment of taxable (*zakāt*) items to the taxable limit for which the religious text must be consulted, it is clear that it is within religion. And if

they are of a conventional or rational type, such as most subjects, it is clear that their definition and the knowledge about them are outside religion. In different subjects, the foundations of religion refer people to conventional and rational facts. Similarly, two types of methods can be observed:

The first type is extra-religious and the second type is intra-religious. The method of affirming religious laws which depends on the use of religious proofs and rational thinking, and not any personal or specific taste, such as emotions, imaginary premises, unproven hypothetical questions, and the like, is intra-religious. On the other hand, since the very ways of attaining knowledge and a sound mind are personal matters, they directly involve relying on extra-religious matters. Relying on them also has an intra-religious dimension from a general perspective, taking into account the spirit of "*Allah does not task any soul beyond its capacity.*"¹

Fourth: Can a definition of religion encompass all dimensions, or is it enough to refer to the basic methods of religion? What is the criterion for distinguishing the main part from the secondary parts? As witnessed throughout history, in the realm of science and philosophy, such an ideal definition is unattainable, particularly when it involves the soul, self, personality, mind, and spirit. However, the non-attainability of such an ideal has never resulted in the decline, halt and retrogressive movement of humanity in advanced sciences, philosophy, industry, art, and culture. The long tradition of sciences, worldviews and other truths necessitates definition and proof that, as long as man is capable, he acquires more knowledge about four relationships, viz. the relationship of man with God, his relationship with himself, his relationship with the world, and his relationship with fellow humanity. He does not wait at all for a moment to perfectly know all dimensions—outward and inward—as well as variable potentials of a thing and prove all circumstances pertaining to it. Throughout history, you cannot find even a single mathematician who suspended his activity and efforts in mathematics on the ground that he had not attained the truth of numbers. Similarly, with respect to his inquiries in physics, a physicist would not wait for the time to know perfectly the truth of causation of physical events, and then define and affirm the same. In the same vein, do you know of any

¹. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:286. In this volume, the translation of Qur'anic passages is adapted from Sayyid 'Alī Qulī Qarā'i, *The Qur'an with a Phrase-by-Phrase English Translation* (London: Islamic College for Advanced Studies Press, 2004). [Trans.]

psychologist who, under the pretext of not perfectly and accurately knowing the truth of mind, self, intuitive knowledge (self-consciousness), personification, and tens of similar psychological facts, abandons his work and looks for another job?

From these empirical observations, we arrive at the conclusion that in knowing religion one must be contented with the principal elements. The realization of the principal elements of religion and profound acceptance and belief in them leads to the spiritual advancement of a person. Just this degree of knowledge places the believing person in a state of spiritual mirth and growth, or even contributes in the gradual religious enlightenment of another person.

﴿وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَعْلَمُكُمُ اللَّهُ﴾

“Be wary of Allah and Allah shall teach you.”¹

﴿وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبْلَنَا﴾

“As for those who strive in Us, We shall surely guide them in Our ways.”²

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ فُرْقَانًا﴾

“O, you who have faith! If you are wary of Allah, He shall appoint a criterion³ for you.”⁴

تو پای به راه در نه و هیچ مگوی خود راه بگوید که چون باید رفت

Make your own step and never say / That the way has to tell you that it must be trodden.

Classification of the Definitions of Religion

The most logical way of dealing with numerous definitions is to classify them. Based on various academic motives, different classifications of the definitions of religion have been proposed.

The classification used in this treatise is as follows:

¹ *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:282.

² *Sūrat al-‘Ankabūt* 29:69.

³ That is, a knowledge which will enable you to distinguish between truth and falsehood. [Q. Trans.]

⁴ *Sūrat al-Anfāl* 8:29.

1. Common definitions based upon a common concept or, common features of religions which attempt to be comprehensive
2. Essentialist definitions which analyze the essence of religion
3. Psychological definitions
4. Sociological definitions
5. Utilitarian definitions
6. Ethical definitions

Chapter 2 ***Common Definitions of Religion***

Introduction

Many scholars of religion have tried to examine the common features of religions and present a common and all-encompassing definition based upon their common elements. Logically speaking, there are various ways of acquiring the common feature. The use of what Wittgenstein¹ called ‘family resemblance’ is one of these ways. John Hick, for example, tries to present a common definition of religion based upon the ‘family resemblance’, and regards the salvation theory of religions as their common feature.²

The main ambiguity in this kind of definitions is the lack of differentiation between the principal elements of religion and its secondary features. Many religious decrees are common but they are not identical with the essence of religion. We shall survey and assess four common definitions of religion based upon the common features of religions.

Metaphysical Definitions of Religion

Some of the philosophers regard any school of thought as religion, which has the following three principal elements of belief:

1. There is a world beyond the world of tangibles
2. The world of nature has a purpose
3. The world of being has a moral system

The third element can be analyzed in two ways. One way is that the world of being is such that it perceives what is morally good or evil. The other way is that the world of being is such that it awards for moral goodness and punishes for wickedness.³

Assessment

Some critical points to this definition are worth mentioning:

¹. Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein (1889-1951): an Austrian-born philosopher who inspired two of the century’s principal philosophical movements, viz. logical positivism and ordinary language philosophy. [Trans.]

². John Hick, *Falsafeh-ye Dīn*, trans. Behzād Sālikī, p. 2.

³. *Hawzeh wa Dāneshgāh* Magazine, issue 3, p. 68.

First, concerning the first belief, man is also a reality that is situated between the natural and supernatural worlds.

دو سر هر دو حلقة هستی به حقیقت به هم تو پیوستی

Both two heads are of the axis of existence. Indeed you are also attached to them.

Man's search in this domain is meant for the improvement of his supernatural asset. Acquiring more knowledge about the dimensions, realities and laws of nature helps him advance in the supernatural realm.

Second, the world of nature's purposefulness is connected to a principal belief that the world of creation depends on the All-wise and Absolute God, who is devoid of any futile and vain act.

Third, in this definition the question of God is raised ambiguously. That there is a world beyond the world of nature and tangibles is an extremely general statement, for it is possible to refer to a world in which there is no mention of God, such as the world of myths and fables.

Fourth, in saying that the world of being is such that it gives reward or retribution to what is morally good or evil, does 'the world of being' refer to this world or include the otherworldly existence as well? If it refers only to this world, then good deeds are not all rewarded in this world. In the same manner, because of this world's limited capacity [to compensate], the criminals cannot be duly punished for all their crimes in this world. Of course, we have the law of causation, or action and reaction in this world but the capacity of this world is not enough to compensate all human actions. Unless the eternal world is accepted, reward and punishment for what is morally good and bad cannot be considered.

Fifth, in some creeds, particularly the ascetic schools, the abovementioned three points can be seen, without them claiming to be forms of religion.

Sixth, not every moral system is religious. The moral system whose foundation is God, in the sense that the criterion for good and evil in it lies in the Divine commands, has religious dimensions. The foundation of what is morally good and evil in religion is revelation, which is immune from error and deviation. If to say that the world of being perceives what is morally good and evil means that it has the ability to do so, then it is acceptable from a religious perspective, in view of the fact that all parts of the world of being are in a state of glorifying, prostrating and remembering God. And if it

means that like human beings, the world of being also acquires knowledge of what is morally good and evil and the perception of the world of being is like human knowledge about the abovementioned matters, then this meaning is not a religious necessity.

That the world of being compensates what is morally good or bad can be interpreted in two ways: One is that the world of being's giving of reward is like one of the laws which God has prescribed in the world of being. It is the same law of causation whose enactment and implementation is like those of the other laws of God. The other way is that as a warning to His creatures, God the Glorious has directly enacted and implemented the said law. We must know that this causation is only for the awareness of human beings:

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِيْثَةً﴾

“Every soul is hostage to what it has earned.”¹

Otherwise, because of the incapability of the world of matter to implement absolutely the law of divine justice for good and evil deeds, it can be implemented in the eternal world. It can be said that in this definition, three subjects which are acceptable and of immense importance for religion are mentioned. Yet, it needs to separate performing religious duties and rights from moral cases. On the other hand, there has been no categorical and decisive statement regarding the Sacred Being of God, His control over creation, Attributes of Perfection, and the Resurrection.

Aston's Definition

W.G. Aston, a contemporary philosopher of religion, presents the following as the common features of religions:

1. Belief in metaphysical beings
2. Difference between the sacred and the worldly
3. Rites which are concentrated on certain things
4. A set of moral rules whose implementation is guaranteed by God or gods
5. Specific religious feelings (such as fear, reverence, sense of guilt, and gratitude) which are expressed before sacred things or in the performance of rites

¹. *Sūrat al-Muddaththir* 74:38. [Trans.]

6. Worship and other forms of connection with God or gods
7. A general viewpoint about the world as a unit and the station of man in it (worldview)
8. Relatively comprehensive organization of human life based upon such a viewpoint (ideology)
9. A united social group supported by the abovementioned elements (community or church).

Assessment

It seems these thinkers are sensitive to the word ‘God’, as they talk about ‘metaphysical beings’. The same sensitivity caused some Western countries to use the term ‘supreme being’ instead of the word ‘God’ in their constitutions! Essential to religion is the belief in the existence of God, and not merely metaphysical creatures. Of course, belief in metaphysical creatures such as the angels, and souls that have reached the lofty station of immateriality, eternity, and the truths pertaining to them, is a part of religious beliefs.

Differentiating sacred matter from the worldly is not true to all religions.

Rites, concentrated on certain things, are related to primitive religions. Rites exist in religions with divine origins which are not centered on certain things, but which are held as a form of worship, linking the most insignificant to the most significant. Rites of the primitive periods, whether they are in the form of totem, taboo, or any other form, have nothing to do with the global Abrahamic faith.

In religions with divine origins, the criterion for the moral rules is God, and not that God merely guarantees the implementation of laws.

To have certain religious sentiments is one of the effects of belief in God. Rites in religion make a person experience particular spiritual states. In some creeds and religions, rites with superstitious underpinning exist, and they cannot be compared with the rites of religions with divine origins.

Religion fosters unity among individuals. This is one of the essentials and effects of religion and not the religion itself. Of course, the ‘single community’ (*ummatan wāhidah*) which is attained through religious conviction cannot be compared with organizations formed by groups, because the goal of religion is to let human beings move as a single caravan

toward their sublime Origin. Unity of a religious community is not similar to a racial, geographical, or political organization formed for a particular purpose, such as defense against an enemy. Rather, as stated in Islamic sources, faithful individuals are like a single body; if one part experiences pain, all parts will experience the same. The souls of faithful individuals are like a single soul, and the link of the soul of faithful person to God is stronger than the link between the sun and its rays.¹

There is no doubt that the affairs of the world of being are connected with sacred truths, which are sometimes distinct from worldly matters. In Islam, however, it can be said that they are related to the world of creation and, all parts of the world of creation, whether they are inward or outward, are divine signs. “*Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real*”² and “*So whichever way you turn, there is the face of Allah!*”³ It follows then, that in a sense, the entire universe has a sacred dimension.

The phrase “Rites which are concentrated on certain things” means the presence of a set of rites in every religion. It is correct but the taboo rites must be distinguished from rites of worship and other rational inclinations to the metaphysical.

The meaning of the statement, “The guarantor of the implementation of moral rules is God or gods” must be clarified. In this regard, there are some possibilities:

First possibility: It means that God helps human beings so that their actions are consistent with moral rules. Of course, one can infer from the sources of Abrahamic Faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) that the justice and grace of God makes it necessary that He guides His servants to the path of material and spiritual prosperity.

Second possibility: “The guarantor of the implementation of moral rules” means control and stimulation of the pure conscience and not deterministic factors that control actions.

Third possibility: “Moral rules” refer to religious laws, duties and rights

¹. *Al-Uṣūl min al-Kāfi*, vol. 2, p. 166.

². *Sūrat Fussilat* 41:53. [Trans.]

³. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:115. [Trans.]

because of their association with God. It is because God enacted them and He is cognizant of the interaction of people with one another. If it means this third possibility, then it is closer to reality compared to the other two possibilities.

Specific religious feelings (such as fear, reverence, sense of guilt, and gratitude) which are expressed before sacred things or in the performance of rites:

On one hand, such concepts are not exclusive to religion, for when a rational person sees himself in front of a Real Being higher than him, he experiences a sense of cautiousness coupled with hope, a sense of awe. When a rational and wary person with a sound mind learns of the majesty of the world of being and its vastness and orderliness, he definitely experiences astonishment (and not primitive bewilderment, doubt and skepticism). Similarly, anyone who does something against the law—provided he has a sound mind and personality—will feel ashamed, and this feeling is the result of committing a sin, although he may not use the same terms. Similarly, gratitude or thanksgiving in times of joy caused by material and spiritual favors in life, attributed to mere luck, is a common phenomenon. All such phenomena can have religious underpinning when they connect man to God.

“Worship and other forms of connection with God or gods,” are not acceptable to Abrahamic monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) because ‘gods’ are not objects of worship and other religious connections. In the said religions, there are no such things as ‘gods’ at all.¹

A general viewpoint about the world as a unit and the station of man in it (worldview):

This viewpoint consists of the following:

- The world of being is a creation of God
- The world of being is created based upon the governance and will of God for a lofty purpose

Man in this world is a very important being with various talents by which he can have interactive relationship with all levels and dimensions of the world in which he lives, and the magnitude and quality of his perfection depend on

¹. For further information, see *Tafsir wa Naqd wa Tahsil az Mathnawi*, vol. 10, pp. 63-73.

such a relationship.

Man can have two types of honor:

The first type is intrinsic honor:

﴿وَلَقَدْ كَرَمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ وَهَمْلَنَا هُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَرَزَقْنَا هُمْ مِنَ الطَّيَّابَاتِ وَفَضَّلْنَا هُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا﴾

“Certainly We have honored the Children of Adam, and carried them over land and sea, and provided them with all the good things, and given them an advantage over many of those We have created with a complete preference.”¹

All human beings possess this honor, if they do not deprive themselves of it by committing treachery (*khiyānah*).

The second type is acquired honor:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائلَ لِتَعْرَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْفَاقُكُمْ﴾

“O mankind! Indeed We created you from a male and a female, and made you nations and tribes that you may identify one another. Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-wary among you.”²

Relatively comprehensive organization of human life based upon such a viewpoint (ideology):

This is the same relationship of man with the world, the third of the four relationships upon which all religions with divine origins are organized: (1) man's relationship with himself; (2) man's relationship with God; (3) man's relationship with the world of being; and (4) man's relationship with his fellow human beings.

Therefore, there will be no objection if we say, “Relatively comprehensive organization of human life based upon the abovementioned four relationships”.

A united social group supported by the abovementioned elements (community or church):

¹ *Sūrat al-Isrā’* (or *Banī Isrā’il*) 17:70.

² *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* 49:13.

In this part of the definition of religion, two ambiguous issues must be examined:

a) The social organization in itself is not a pillar of the essence of religion, for even if only one person or a few people believe in religion in this world, he or they will still constitute a community (*ummah*). As such, the Noble Qur'ān introduces Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) ('a) alone as a community:

﴿إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ كَانَ أُمَّةً بَشَّارَةً﴾

“Indeed Abraham was a nation.”¹

Of course, as the number of individuals and communities that follow the religion increases, the social organization of those who believe in the said religion (*ummah*) also becomes larger.

b) *Ummah* refers to the group of people who believe in a particular religion, or if we really broaden its meaning, it refers to the group of people that cling to a given ideology, whether it is religious or not.

Like mosque, and other houses of worship built on earth as places of worship, church means a center for collective worship and devotion, unless the original meaning of it is changed into another one.

Shari‘atī's Definition

Dr. ‘Alī Shari‘atī² enumerates the common features of religions as follows:

1. Religion declares existence as meaningful
2. The world has an ultimate goal

It is correct, if meaningfulness and purposefulness of the world means its association with God and the sublime wisdom and will of the Sacred Essence. This condition depends on the belief that the world has an ultimate goal. Similarly, it necessitates the meaningfulness of man and history. If the goal is not limited to the creation of the world, at least it can be regarded as one of its highest goals. Therefore, Shari‘atī might have possibly stated the first two points as one.

¹. *Sūrat al-Nahl* 16:120.

². ‘Alī Shari‘atī (1933-77): an Iranian revolutionary and sociologist who focused on the sociology of religion and considered one of the most influential Iranian intellectuals of the 20th century. [Trans.]

The duality of the human being in all religions

If this ‘duality’ refers to the physical and spiritual, the dispositional and the behavioral, the outward and the inward, the intrinsic and the extrinsic, it is correct.

Sanctity in the world

Sanctity or sacredness in the world can be considered from two perspectives. The first perspective is that the world relies upon the wisdom and will of God, and the notion of the world as a divine sign (*āyah*) (both within man and in the outside world) refers to this perspective:

﴿سُرِّيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْيَسُنَ لَهُمْ اللَّهُ الْحَقُّ﴾

“Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real”¹

According to the second perspective, the facility and potential of this world are meant to prepare man and urge him towards the sublime goal of perfection. The ardent desire for it exists in the hearts of all people who are immune from selfishness. In the speech of the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a), in reply to someone who rebuked the world, this perspective is expressed in this manner:

O’ you who abuse the world, O’ you who have been deceived by its deceit and cheated by its wrongs. Do you accuse it or should it accuse you? When did it bewilder you or deceive you? ... Certainly, this world is a house of truth for him who appreciates it; a place of safety for him who understands it; a house of riches for him who collects provision from it (for the next world); and a house of instructions for him who draws instruction from it. It is a place of worship for the lovers of Allah; the place of praying for the angels of Allah; the place where the revelation of Allah descends; and the marketing place for those devoted to Allah.”²

The division of all things into tangible and intangible

This division is not a distinctive feature of religions although this is acceptable in religions as an undeniable fact (the division of all things into

¹ *Sūrat Fussilat* 41:53. [Trans.]

² *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Maxim 131.

tangible and intangible).

Religion as the social spirit

This point is also not a distinctive feature of religions, for collective life—whether motivated by the need for division of labor among people, kinship through sexual reproduction or racial unity, or the natural demand for their civility—is a salient feature of human life in the sphere of coexistence.

The global nature of the distinctive features of religion

This issue must also be examined, for all religions with divine origins can be generally grouped into two:

First group: It consists of national religions exclusive to limited groups in the history of religion. The prophets of these religions were not the preeminent ones (*ūlū'l-'azm*) and were limited to their respective time or group.

Second group: It consists of the world religions like the ones associated with Prophet Ibrāhīm ('a) and whose messengers were the *ūlū'l-'azm*, viz. Nūh (Noah), Ibrāhīm, Mūsā (Moses), 'Isā (Jesus), and Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh ('a). If it is not so, then the phrase refers to the common features of all religions such as belief in God, eternity, religious duties and rights, and the like.

"The unity of man and nature" and "the unity of man, nature and the spirit of being"

These two phrases have a very broad meaning and are not a salient feature of the phenomenon called 'religion'. There are philosophers who philosophically acknowledge this unity. Sufis and mystics also believe in this unity and something even higher. They believe that, man, nature, the spirit of the entire universe, and even God are a single being (theory of the unity of being). The stoics and a group of Indian philosophers and mystics believe in this theory. Therefore, these items are not exclusive to religion.

Apprehension, struggle and desire for union (ittīṣāl)

This point is also not free from ambiguity. The possible meanings conceivable are as follows:

- Ardent desire, struggle and aspiration of man to be in union with God are like the union of drops of water and the sea. This possibility is not correct in monotheistic religions, for the Sacred Essence of the

Lord is higher than a creature that He created or originated, to be part of His Sacred Essence.

- Endeavor and desire for change in humanity has the potential to be God-like because of divine attributes that exist within the said potential of man. If it means possession of those attributes within the limits of man, this is possible in monotheistic religions.
- Union means entry into the height of attraction to the Lordly Perfection. In this station, the person can become an embodiment of Divine Lights, but never reach the Sublime Lordly Station. This is the best possible meaning.

Note: The word ‘apprehension’ which implies agitation along the way to perfection is not correct. Instead, ardent desire, serious endeavor and persistence, called *kadhī* (كَدْحٍ) in Arabic, are more accurate than the terms ‘apprehension’ and mere ‘desire’.

Belief in dominance, progress, exaltation, and movement

In this phrase, the word ‘dominance’ requires explanation. If ‘dominance’ means attainment of power for the organization of the four types of relationship (man’s relationship with himself, God, the universe, and fellow human beings), then it is perfectly correct, and it can be said that the attainment of the lofty goal of religion is to acquire such power. Acquisition of power for the organization of relationship with the self means control and mastership over the self. Through this power, a person could set himself along the path of God-wariness (*taqwā*) which means maintenance of self-perfection. And through this *taqwā* he can proceed to the height of attraction to the Sublime Perfection. It also means acquisition of power to organize a relationship with God. Through this power, one can control himself from sin, selfishness and self-centeredness, and undertake the ideal movement. By acquiring power to organize an intellectual, perceptive and interactive relationship with the world of being, he will succeed in self-building.

Emancipation from what exists means emancipation from captivity

If it means disconnection from whatever exists and severance of relationship with whatever is, then it is forbidden in religion. Detachment from the world connection, which is one of the fundamental relationships a person has for his subsistence is actually detachment from the self. Obviously, negation of the self is not the same while pursuing one’s perfection, which emanates

from God's boundless wisdom and favor. The world of being is the passageway for its progress and the Beatific Vision (*liqā' Allāh*) in eternity is its ultimate goal and objective. It must be borne in mind that to be in the world, which in the words of the Commander of the Faithful ('a), is a great place of worship for the wary people. It is not the same as the negation and disconnection seen in Buddhism.

The concept of protection and preservation of man, life and society

There can be no meaning for this except protection of man, life and society from pollution, degradation, fall, and backwardness. This point is perfectly correct in religion, but the word 'concept' must be omitted, for the salient feature of religion is the protection and preservation and not its concept.

Acquaintance, curiosity and engagement in curiosity

Acquaintance, inquiry and research to increase knowledge about the self, God, the world, and fellow human beings, and the use of knowledge and learning along the path of searching for perfection are essentials of religion.

Beauty and art

The meaning of desire for tangible and intelligible beauties which, in addition to the resultant purification of the soul and preparation of the self to soar from this very high platform to the Absolute, Incomparable Beauty, must be shown in the world to shorten the distance of realizing God for people. Moreover, the meaning of 'art' is to undertake artistic intellectual or psychological activities and set purely constructive artistic works at the service of spiritual growth and enhancement of human talents, and not the beauty and art which always exist for all people in various cultures of human society.

Love and worship

Definitely, 'ishq (love) refers to the highest degree of love, passion and craving for Sublime Perfection, which is the totality of beauty and glory, and it is correct to regard this love as one of the salient features of religion. However, what is called 'metaphorical love' or mere love without its attachment to the Sublime Perfection (which is definitely what Sharī'atī intended to mean) is not part of the salient features of religion, in fact, religion is inimical to it. A person's expression of 'virtual love' will lead to the wastage of all his life's assets and capital, for

عشق‌هایی کز پی رنگی بود عشق نبود عاقبت ننگی بود

The love for the sake of a color (outward beauty) is not love. Its end is disgrace.¹

هرچه جز عشق خدای احسن است گر شکر خواری سنت آن جان کندن است

Everything, besides love of the most beauteous God, is good. Eating sugar is (in truth) agony of spirit.²

عاشقان از درد زان نالیده‌اند که نظر تا جایگاه مالیده‌اند

The reason why lovers moan in grief is because they have rubbed their eyes malapropos.³

Meanwhile, worship of God the Glorious, after knowing Him, is the purest essential feature, nay pillar, of religion.

The ideal, ideal man and utopian city

This point can be analyzed under two headings: (1) The ideal means that religion is the ideal goal of human beings. (2) Religion moulds the ideal man. Both propositions are correct. Meanwhile, the ‘utopian city’ (*madīneh-yē fādileh*) means the use of individuals and groups of society with all their positive potentials in social life. This is obviously the purest feature of religion in the dimension of people’s social life.

Awaiting in protest against the status quo and moving toward the ideal

Taking into account the fundamentals of Sharī‘atī’s school of thought, awaiting (*intizār*) means wishing for the emergence of the best society and struggling for its realization. Its perfect form will be possible with the advent of the Master of the Age (‘atfs).⁴ Of course, it must be borne in mind that

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ’ddīn Rūmī*, Book 1, line 205, p. 27. [Trans.]

². *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ’ddīn Rūmī*, Book 1, line 3686, p. 397. [Trans.]

³. That is, they have not purged their inward eye of sensual impressions and therefore have taken a false view. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ’ddīn Rūmī*, Book 4, line 229, p. 31. [Trans.]

⁴. *Wālī al-‘Aṣr*, literally, “Master of the Age” is one the titles of the 12th Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdi (‘a), the others being *Wālī al-Amr* (Master of the Affair), *Imām al-Zamān* (Imām of the Time), etc. The abbreviation, “‘atfs” stands for the Arabic invocative phrase, ‘ajjalallāhu ta ’ilī farajahu ’sh-sharīf (may Allah, the Exalted, expedite his glorious advent), which is invoked after mentioning the name of Imām al-Mahdi. [Trans.]

intizār is not identical with protest (*i ‘tirād*) against the status quo. It actually stems from the feeling of disgust and anguish for the undesirable condition which stands in the way of a perfect collective human life.

Meanwhile, protest against the status quo can be interpreted in two ways:

1. Protest against the status quo stems from the lack of divine pleasure in every condition contrary to the ideal human felicity. In view of the high and reformative potential of human beings, it is a common phenomenon that exists in all communities and nations with rational cultures. Even the lack of divine satisfaction for the status quo is one of the strongest elements of forward movement in history.
2. Protest means the lack of divine pleasure for anything that causes degradation, like mankind steeped in ignorance, poverty and human rights violations, and making efforts to change the direction of life's movement toward its lofty goals and means.

Nature's self-consciousness

This is reiterating “the unity of man, nature and the spirit of being”. This can also be inferred from the Qur’ānic verses that indicate glorification (*tasbīh*) and prostration (*sujūd*) of the creatures in the world. Of course, in proving the self-consciousness of nature, some thinkers have cited the law of causation.

این جهان کوه است و فعل ما آین ندaha را صدا سوی ما آین

This world is the mountain, and our action the shout / The echo of the shouts comes (back) to us.¹

Sharī‘atī has not mentioned three very important salient features of religion:

1. The religious laws, rights, duties, and manners as well as worship of the Sublime Origin (God) and belief in the Resurrection (*ma ‘ād*) must be stated more clearly and elaborately to some extent. Most probably, he contented himself with previous statements. However, as demanded by the law on definitions, it would have been better if he had stated the above points more clearly and elaborately.

The ultimate reply to the six fundamental questions on life can only be provided by religion. They are:

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ‘d-dīn Rūmī*, Book 1, line 215, p. 27. [Trans.]

1. Who am I?
 2. From where I have come?
 3. Where have I come?
 4. With whom am I?
 5. Where shall I go?
 6. What have I come for?
3. The real felicity lies in virtue and sacrifices in the way of lofty human values, such as, faithfulness to promise and covenant, defense of the truth, responsible freedom, justice, and the like. Without religion, the world is nothing but a place for sport, sleeping and eating. If a person uses all his facilities and potentials in the way of selfishness and self-interest, he will lose miserably.

روزگار و چرخ و انجم سر بسر بازیستی گرنہ این روز دراز دهر را فرداستی

The world, fate, and stars, are all your playthings / Otherwise, this long day of fortune is your tomorrow.¹

Geisler's Definition

Geisler² defines religion in its most general sense, thereby encompassing every supposed religion. He regards religion as having two basic characteristics: (1) awareness of something sublime, and (2) total devotion and utmost attachment. So, in his general definition of religion, any consciousness of something sublime coupled with total devotion and utmost attachment is called ‘religion’. The elements of this definition are mentioned as follows:

1. ***Awareness***: A person considers himself professing religion when he is aware or acquainted with something other than himself.
2. ***Something sublime***: A thing is sublime when it transcends and goes beyond direct awareness of a person. Given this, even during unconsciousness, ‘I’ and others apart from ‘me’ are deemed sublime. Moreover, that which is sublime is beyond ones experience (*mujarrabāt*).

¹. Nāṣir Khusrū, *Dīwān-e Ash ‘ar*, Elegy 241.

². Norman L. Geisler (born 1932): a Christian apologist and philosopher noted for his philosophical approach to theology. [Trans.]

3. It pertains to total devotion. Religion comprises something which is beyond mere manifestation; something not stipulated and ultimate; something to which people want to be devoted with utmost sincerity. In other words, it includes not only awareness of anything sublime, but whatever is treated final and whatever requires utmost devotion. Of course, in the words of Ian Ramsey, this devotion most also be total as well as widespread. So, this devotion must be final and universal.

Assessment

Some important points in the definition of Geisler must be examined:

It is true that from the totality of terms used by Geisler, it can be deduced that “that which is sublime” is the object of awareness, total devotion, ultimate affection, and yearning is no other than God, the Perfect and Absolute, that all religions have mentioned, whether explicitly or as something essential to the ideological text. However, in view of the crucial importance of the thing being defined (*mu'arrif*), its name must be specified. If it is argued that not all religions call it ‘God’, the reply is that an ambiguous reality, even if it is described as ‘something sublime’, cannot be considered the foundation of religion, because He must be the Creator of all beings and should have created them according to His sublime wisdom and will.

From this analysis, it is clear that the line “a person considers himself professing religion when he is aware or acquainted with something other than himself” is somewhat inaccurately stated because the concept of God, Exalted is His Station, who is Perfect and Absolute in all aspects, is not clear in the above expression (“something other than himself”). Similarly, the expression “a thing is sublime when it transcends” is not free from ambiguity because it is a common concept, so it must be “a thing is sublime when it transcends all things.”

“...and goes beyond direct awareness of a person”:

This is an excellent point discussed in various expressions in Islam; for example, Prophet Mūsā ('a) is reported to have said to God, “How can I reach You?” In reply, God said:

فَصُدُّكَ لِي وَصُلُّكَ إِلَيَّ.

“As soon as you intend to reach Me, you reach Me.”

Of course, this understanding is not direct or without mediation. Even in intuitive knowledge (self-consciousness), the “I” perceives his self directly, for the perception of the “I” in intuitive knowledge is not possible without negation of “other than I” quickly, generally or briefly. This is while the perception of God only needs intention. This is the meaning of what Geisler said, “That which is sublime is beyond ones experience (*mujarrabāt*).” And in the jargon of Western philosophers, it is *a priori* upon which the philosophy of Kant, in particular, relies.

He said, “Religion comprises of something which is beyond mere manifestation; something not stipulated and ultimate; something to which people want to be devoted with utmost sincerity.” This point is also very fine because in religion familiarity, information and acquaintance with God is not sufficient. Instead, as the very knowledge about that Sacred Being is attained, ardent desire for ‘searching’ in order to obtain His Lordly attraction begins.

In the expression of Ian Ramsey, this devotion most also be total as well as widespread. It is because delight and pleasure from knowing the world is different from devotion to it. That which exists in religion is the former and not the latter. That is, it is delight caused by the fact that the universe has been created according to the lofty wisdom and will of God and witnessing the celestial splendor of the universe impels a person to pay ultimate devotion to God, and not just submit to the universe and surrender himself to it. A majestic element of the universe or one of the lofty aspects of this universe gives rise to devotion to the Creator. Man is not supposed to surrender to the universe. Instead, with utmost cheer and confidence, he must consider it a springboard for his own spiritual flight.

به جهان خرم از آنم که جهان خرم ازوست / عاشقم بر همه عالم که همه عالم
ازوست

I belong to the pleasant world as the pleasant world is from Him. / I am in love with the entire world as the entire world is from Him.¹

¹. Sa‘dī, *Mawā‘iz*, ghazal 13.

Chapter 3 ***Essentialist Definitions of Religion***

Introduction

Traditional definitions, based upon the logical Aristotelian definition, attempt to indicate the nature of religion; its category, its constitutive elements and its indexes. Some definitions imply perplexity and impotence as the basic nature of religion. Others regard it as a set of principal elements of belief, morality and rules.

In the present chapter, numerous essentialist definitions shall be examined. The definitions of Spencer, Max Müller, Bonhoeffer, Havelock Ellis, Spengler, Shakul, Tyler, D'Holbach, Santayana, Otto, Cassirer, Sartre, and Dewey are among those mentioned.

Spencer's Definition

Spencer,¹ an English philosopher, regards religion as belief in the presence of something absolute, or the absolute presence of something beyond investigation. In other words, according to him, religion means plunging into an ocean of secrets.²

Assessment

This definition points to one of the basic pillars of religion, but it contains many ambiguities, the most important of which are as follows:

There are secrets in religion but not everything in religion is mysterious, because the physical ('ālam-e khalq) and the metaphysical world, which is the world of command ('ālam-e amr) are included.

Since the world of command is above that of creation and our faculties of understanding it are limited, information about it is substantiated by revelation or general intuition. It is not like pieces of information about the world of creation which are based upon sensory perceptions, experience and thinking. The most majestic Truth and perfect Being who created both worlds is God. As such, He is perceivable through inward purification and

¹. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903): an English philosopher, prominent classical liberal political theorist, and sociological theorist of the Victorian era who developed an all-embracing conception of evolution as the progressive development of the physical world, biological organisms, the human mind, human culture and societies. [Trans.]

². *Bunyādhī-ye Dīn wa Jāmi 'ehshināsī*, p. 37.

refinement. For example, in reply to Dhu‘lab al-Yamānī, who asked him, “Have you seen your Lord?” the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) said,

لَمْ أَعْبُدْ رَبِّاً لَمْ أَرَهُ.

“I do not worship a Lord whom I cannot see [with the eye of my heart].”

Spencer’s definition is a product of the average level of understanding, because he has to distinguish between plunging into noble perplexity, which is beyond the majesty of the world of being for the progressive men of learning, and immersing into the ocean of secrets in which he cannot find anything except darkness.

It is not clear what he means by “the presence of something absolute”. Does it mean the presence of man before God? Does it mean His presence in the universe? Does it mean His presence in human hearts?

This definition does not explain why the said ‘absolute’ is beyond investigation. Obviously, most men of learning of the East and West have conducted an investigation of the said Absolute Truth by studying the law of causation, order, sense of complaint, intrinsic perception, sense of noble duty, proof of necessity and perfection, existential evidence, discovery of the secrets of nature, knowing the self, and the like. Of course, because of the limitations of human potential and faculties of perception, this investigation does not reach His Essence.

‘The absolute that is beyond investigation’ certainly refers to God, whereas intellectually, the existence of God and His Attributes can be understood and perceived through inward witnessing (*shuhūd-e durūnī*). I wish Western thinkers would acknowledge that they live in a world in which their knowledge and insight can never penetrate the real essence of things. Yet, through the same common knowledge and insight, they can acquire hundreds of thousands of facts in all aspects of their lives and through the advancements they have achieved, they can lead a life free of agitation. Proofs of this claim follow: (1) in a set of compound items whose parts are related to one another, the existence of an unknown part is enough to falsify any claim of knowledge about the other parts; (2) it is impossible to distinguish the effects of perceptive elements on perceived things ‘as it is’ is scientifically set. Obviously, the effect of perceptive elements in perceiving a thing, apart from reaching it, is zero degree.

Another Definition of Religion Similar to Spencer's

Religion is something metaphysical and deals with beings beyond the limit of our knowledge. The metaphysical world is a mysterious world whose nature is unknowable and incomprehensible. According to this definition, religion means reflecting on something beyond our knowledge and thinking.

Assessment

This definition is also inaccurate. According to this definition of religion, religion is unknowable let alone being acceptable and useful. The proponents of this definition have imagined that anything metaphysical is beyond human knowledge. There are many perceivable truths in religion. For example, religion talks about the world of being having a purpose, something any person of sound mind can understand.

This definition presents religion as something unknowable and inexplicable. If so, then all men of learning seek something incomprehensible. Can Khwājah Naṣīr¹ and Max Planck² pursue something unknowable? Heisenberg³ said, "I cannot say that I am a religious person; what I can assert instead is, that I am in the process of becoming religious."⁴ Does such an outstanding personality talk about something unknowable? After his scientific discovery, Kepler⁵ sat in his office and raised his hands, saying, "O God! I praise You for letting me read Your signs and for letting me use them in the way of serving Your servants." Was he talking about something unintelligible?

In the realm of religion there is general knowledge and intuitive perceptions about the four relationships (man's relationships with himself, God, the

¹. Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, better known as Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (597-672 AH/1200-73): a Persian polymath and prolific writer—an astronomer, biologist, chemist, mathematician, philosopher, physician, physicist, scientist, theologian, and *marja' al-taqlid* (religious authority). [Trans.]

². Max Karl Ernst Ludwig Planck (1858-1947): a German physicist, father of quantum physics, and winner of the 1918 Nobel Prize for physics. [Trans.]

³. Werner Karl Heisenberg (1901-76): a German theoretical physicist who made foundational contributions to quantum mechanics and is best known for asserting the uncertainty principle of quantum theory. [Trans.]

⁴. No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

⁵. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630): a German mathematician, astronomer and astrologer, and key figure in the 17th century scientific revolution. [Trans.]

world, and his fellow human beings) that can answer the fundamental questions of man, such as the following: Who am I? Where have I come from? Where shall I go? Similarly, religion makes use of pieces of knowledge supported by scientific observations; for example, in proving the existence of God, one can utilize scientific propositions.

According to the above definition, religion means reflection on something beyond knowledge and thinking. Those who believe in this definition of religion barely see the earth from a long distance and express their view about the nature of the earth and the millions of millions of creatures living in it, saying, "This is it and nothing else."

An important pillar of religion is belief in supernatural truths, but religion itself is not metaphysical in nature, for religion manifests itself in psychological states, actions, speeches, worldly life and acts of worship, in a physical form. Similarly, prosperity and excellence, products of religiosity are manifest in this very world just as they will be realized in the eternal world. Can it be said that the following truths which are an outcome of religion—peace of mind, inner delight, and adherence to the laws and principles prescribed in this world for the wholesome life of people are metaphysical?

What is stated in defining the nature of religion is belief in God, a metaphysical truth as well as belief in other metaphysical truths such as the angels, souls, revelation, Resurrection, eternity and general responsibility.

Religion does not deal only with beings and things which are beyond the limit of our knowledge, for the most majestic metaphysical truth is God, and through inner purification, and by acting upon the lofty principles which activate his God-seeking disposition, a person can perfectly sense the ray of the Divine Light, as did the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī ('a), who said:

لَمْ أَعْبُدْ رَبَّاً لَمْ أَرَهُ.

"I do not worship a Lord whom I cannot see [with the eye of my heart]."

We have not seen the essence of beauty but we can observe its various manifestations, for the flower is a manifestation of beauty but not its essence. A sweet voice is beautiful. A waterfall, moonlight, good penmanship, a human face, and thousands of other beautiful phenomena are all manifestations of beauty. We can definitely perceive within ourselves the

overall essence of beauty whereas it has no distinctive features of any of the beautiful manifestations and is different from the general concept deduced from the said distinctive features. The general concept of man is discerned from what can be deduced from the salient features of individuals like Hasan, Ḥamīd, Kāzim and the like. This is because the general concept of man can be corroborated with all human beings as perfect samples. However, beauty as a general concept cannot be corroborated with its different manifestations. In a nutshell, God is perceivable to us just as the absolute essence of beauty, justice, and wisdom is. The following questions must be posed to those who believe in the following lines about religion—“According to this definition, religion means reflection about something beyond our knowledge and thinking,” “It is unknowable” and “It is incomprehensible”:

1. Are general perceptions of the world in philosophies gained through knowledge and thinking? Of course, but it is not because the facts acquired are similar to each other. Most perceptions of the world are based upon intellectual taste, supposition and intuition and thus, widely different.
2. Are discoveries and inventions in science the result of knowledge and thinking? No, because irrespective of their important contribution, it is clear that the most fundamental factors are intuition and inspiration.
3. Can all the socio-religious revolutions throughout history, and all the sacrifices in the way of truth, freedom and justice with religious motives be considered imagination or illusion?
4. Does religiously motivated endurance of all hardships, a serious struggle against selfishness, and the pursuit of truth stem from the pursuit of the unknowable? Obviously, the reply to such questions is negative.

Max Müller's Definition

In defining religion, Max Müller¹ said: “It is an endeavor or attempt to portray that which cannot be portrayed, to state that which cannot be stated, and a yearning for the Infinite.”²

¹. Friedrich Max Müller (1823-1900), more regularly known as Max Müller: a German philologist and Orientalist, and one of the founders of the western academic field of Indian studies and the discipline of comparative religion. [Trans.]

². No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

Assessment

This definition of Müller is showing inability to understand religion. Can it be said that millions of intelligent and conscious people have strived and are striving for something impossible, and that millions of books on religion state what cannot be stated? Is the attempt to know truths like intangible beauty an attempt to know something which cannot be known? Is it logical for us to know that the most serious and most grandiose religiously motivated acts and sacrifices in history are related to something which can neither be portrayed nor stated?

Furthermore, it is the human understanding of religious truths and acting upon them that give meaning to other human knowledge, acts and words. Has religion so far given a futile answer? It is clear that it has not. Now, Müller and his likes must answer this question : How can an indescribable illusion give meaning and wisdom to all realities in the universe?

According to Müller, scholars of the caravan of humanity that have studied and written millions of books on divine matters and the realities about them are foolish people who spend their lives portraying that which cannot be portrayed and stating that which cannot be stated. Figures like Newton,¹ Khwājah Naṣīr, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna),² Max Planck, and all the past scientists who, in the words of Planck, are all religious scientists and men of learning have spent their lives in vain and futile matters!

Definition of Religion as a Set of Beliefs, Moral Codes and Rules

Some have defined religion by taking into account the main elements of its message. One example is the definition of religion as a set of beliefs, moral codes and rules necessary for administering the affairs of human society and training human beings.

¹ Isaac Newton (1643-1727): an English physicist, mathematician, astronomer, natural philosopher, alchemist, and theologian whose best-known discoveries are the laws of motion and universal gravitation as expounded in his 1687 magnum opus *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (usually called the *Principia*). [Trans.]

² Abū ‘Alī al-Husayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā Balkhī, known as Abū ‘Alī Sīnā Balkhī or Ibn Sīnā and commonly known in English by his Latinized name “Avicenna” (c. 980-1037) was a Persian polymath and the foremost physician and philosopher of his time. He was also an astronomer, chemist, geologist, logician, paleontologist, mathematician, physicist, poet, psychologist, scientist, and teacher. [Trans.]

Bonhoeffer's Definition

Bonhoeffer¹ refers to religion as “a metaphysical system expressing a concept of the world.”²

Assessment

One of the commonest definitions of religion is the definition above. If it implies the comprehensiveness of the definition of religion, then “Religion is a concept” must be far more comprehensive.,

If “concept of the world” means that the purposefulness of the world is discussed in religion, then it is correct. From the religious perspective, the world is a manifestation of Divine wisdom and will and it has a purpose and end. The purposefulness of the world is only one of the subjects discussed in religion. There are many issues in religion not pointed out in this definition.

Ellis' Definition

For Havelock Ellis,³ “Religion means intuitive knowledge of the union with the universe.”⁴

Assessment

Among the definitions being considered, this is definitely one of those definitions whose purport will astonish the researchers. In this definition, there is no mention of any religious law, principle, and subject. Of course, the abovementioned case is worth reflecting. In it, the following issues are included:

1. Man's union with the universe (man as part of the universe):

Intuitive perception of this point includes everybody—from the common people to the most prominent scientists and philosophers. That is, all people with the least amount of awareness can understand it.

2. Man is the universe and the universe is man:

In poetical lines of Shaykh Mahmūd Shabistarī,⁵ this is mentioned in a more

¹. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45): a German Lutheran pastor, theologian, and martyr. [Trans.]

². *Majalleh-ye Kalām*, issue 2, p. 69.

³. Henry Havelock Ellis, known as Havelock Ellis (1859-1939): a British physician and psychologist, writer, and social reformer who studied human sexuality. [Trans.]

⁴. No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

⁵. Mahmūd Shabistarī (1288-1340): one of the most celebrated Persian Sufi poets of

sublime way:

عدم آیینه عالم عکس و انسان چو چشم عکس در وی شخص پنهان
 تو چشم عکسی و او نور دیده است به دیده دیده را هرگز که دیده است
 جهان انسان شد و انسان جهانی از این پاکیزه‌تر نبود بیانی

Absent is the mirror, and the universe is like a reflection. / Someone is hidden in it, like the eye of the reflection.

You are the eye of the reflection, and He is the light of the eyes; / Who has ever seen that true light with his eyes?

Indeed, man becomes the universe, and the universe becomes man. / Can it be expressed in a way better than this?¹

3. In the couplets of Shabistarī, the word ‘He’ or ‘Him’ refers to God. Therefore, the concept of God is discussed as an essential truth in the notion of “man’s union with the universe”, whereas in the definition of Ellis, God does not exist at all.

4. If we want to give an essential speculative interpretation of the definition of Ellis, we must say that he is a person of existential unity.

Spengler's Definition

According to Spengler,² “Living and experimental metaphysical philosophy means the assumed realization of an idea for which there is no way, and to consider real the supernatural, and believe in the existence of a world far from reach, but real.”³

This definition which is not related to religion as indicated by the phrase “living and experimental metaphysical philosophy” is worth reflecting upon. Probably, Spengler wants to say that religion is a living and experimental metaphysical philosophy and that, “the assumed realization of an idea for

the 14th century whose most famous work is a mystic text called *The Secret Rose Garden* (*Gulshan-e Rāz*) written about 1311 in rhyming couplets (*mathnawi*). [Trans.]

¹. Shaykh Maḥmūd Shabistarī, *Golshan-e Rāz*, part 8. [Trans.]

². Oswald Manuel Arnold Gottfried Spengler (1880-1936) was a German historian and philosopher whose interests also included mathematics, science, and art. [Trans.]

³. No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

which there is no way.” The reply and criticism for this phrase has already been given in the previous definitions.

Bursur Shatul and Tylor's Definition

Bursur Shatul is of the opinion that religion is nothing but submission to the world of secrets. With the aim of clarifying it, Tylor¹ defines religion as belief in strange spiritual creatures.² The two definitions have common defects and lack focus on the main facets of religion.

D'Holbach's Definition

D'Holbach³ believed that science must replace religion because it depends on personal knowledge.⁴ According to him, knowledge is based upon sensory perception (*hiss*) and this connotes that one must replace with science that which he earlier believed, along with religion as the source of explaining things, for religion is not definite knowledge. His view about Christianity as a superstition propagated by priests is equivalent to the empty claim of religion offering the kind of good life the Christian priests teach.

Assessment

By replacing religion with science, D'Holbach wants to set religion aside, because religion does not offer definite knowledge.

D'Holbach must be asked: Why does religion not offer definite knowledge? Is there any knowledge higher than one that links us with God and sets a motion within ourselves? Secondly, science pertains to perception and observation. Religion pertains to both perception and “becoming or what is” for the attainment of the lofty goal in life.

To say that knowledge is based only upon sensory perception is not correct because apart from sensory perception we also possess intellection (*ta'aqqu*). Moreover, we also have divine inspirations (*ilhām*) and mystical unraveling (*iktishāf*) which are impossible without intuition (*shuhūd*).

¹ Most probably, it refers to Edward Burnett Tylor (1832-1917): an English anthropologist considered to be the representative of cultural evolutionism. [Trans.]

² No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

³ Paul-Henri Thiry, Baron d'Holbach (1723-89): a French-German author, philosopher, encyclopedist, prominent figure in the French Enlightenment, and best known for his atheism, and for his voluminous writings against religion, the most famous of them being *The System of Nature* (1770). [Trans.]

⁴ *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*, p. 647.

Thirdly, sensory perception means the transfer of the perceptible (*mahsūsāt*) to the human mind and they are reflected in the mind as nothing but specific details; otherwise, mirror and limpid water which also reflect forms and shapes of bodies must possess knowledge. We must accept the existence of a force called mental abstraction or separation of general matters to deduce general laws in the form of knowledge. Thus, sensory perception cannot be regarded as the only source of human knowledge.

D'Holbach believes that since phenomena were explained before by means of religion, now they must be interpreted by means of science. That is, according to him, religion was the source of explaining things before and now it is science. Granted that in some primitive religions in the past, people used to interpret things in the world by the help of religion, this does not mean that all religions interpret the universe from a devotional perspective. We can see that Islam has taken science as one of its basic elements. For this reason, during the Middle Ages, Islam rescued science from extinction, to say the least. Both science and religion have their own specific functions and one cannot replace the other, for religion is rooted in man's inner being, and thus, it cannot be set aside. How we wish D'Holbach and his likes had also acquired information about Muslim societies and seen how Islam and the nations following it give foremost value to knowledge from the beginning of its spread, and how they saved science from extinction during the Middle Ages (third and fourth centuries AH).

By saying that science must replace religion, D'Holbach is like one who says that the eye must replace the head and feet. His view about Christianity as a superstition propagated by priests must be closely examined. Do D'Holbach and his likes possess academic honesty? If they did, why did they not declare that apart from the practices in the name of Christianity, there are other realities and currents such as those of Islam? Under the pretext of their perceptions of Christianity and its leading figures, why did they implicate other religions?

Santayana's Definition

Santayana¹ regarded religion as a bridge between magic and science.²

¹ George Santayana (1863-1952): a Spanish philosopher, essayist, poet, and novelist. [Trans.]

² No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

Assessment

While defining religion, if Santayana is contented with this statement (and even if he is an authority, which he is not), he must be asked if science and philosophy necessitate that magic, science and religion must be first defined and then the status of each of them be stated in relation to one another? Our objection to D'Holbach is also applicable to Santayana. He must be told, "Mr. Santayana, you have no idea that magic and the like are strongly condemned and prohibited in Islam, and those who practice them are deemed faithless! On the other hand, do you know that no school of thought or ideology can ever parallel the religion of Islam in defending knowledge, reason and understanding?"

Otto's Definition

Fond of using history in the philosophy of religion, Rudolf Otto¹ acquired concepts similar to what Ritschl² and Troeltsch³ do.⁴ After acquiring [concepts], he systematically develops them. Like his predecessors, he did not suppose anything absolute. His interpretation of religion revolves around the axis of sacredness.⁵

Assessment

There are many issues that can be tackled in this definition of religion but we shall only deal with some of them:

1. Obviously, from the human perspective, it is very useful to benefit from historical trends of every phenomenon and sometimes it is even undeniably indispensable. For example, if we want to completely understand the importance of economic issues, we have to refer to history and try to know whether economy has been discussed throughout history as a constant need for the human race. Of course, we have to distinguish between the interior and exterior, existence and appearance, and material and spiritual, as

¹. Rudolf Otto (1869-1937): an eminent German Lutheran theologian and scholar of comparative religion. [Trans.]

². Albrecht Ritschl (1822-89): a German theologian. [Trans.]

³. Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923): a German Protestant theologian and writer on philosophy of religion and philosophy of history, and an influential figure in German thought before 1914. [Trans.]

⁴. We shall deal with the definition of religion by Ritschl and Troeltsch in the first heading of chapter 5.

⁵. No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

well as, the multidimensional aspects of different phenomena. Take for example the case of an animal statue in a cave or mountain while a human statue or some human statues standing looking at it. The purpose behind standing or looking is not hidden or spiritual and can be caused by different factors. So, by just observing that setup we cannot be absolutely certain about their real motive. For instance, are they merely looking at the animal? Are these people familiar with this animal? Do they consider it an intermediary between them and the metaphysical? Thus, by mere observance of phenomena and various events in history, one cannot be certain about the specific motives behind its occurrence in a particular community or nation.

2. On which basis did Otto formulate these concepts? Is his basis inalterable or alterable? Is it regional or local? Is it global or regional?

3. Taking into account the fundamental principles of religions, religion cannot exist without the belief in God and acceptance of responsibility in life and a set of other religious principles. If we consider the concept of sacredness in the above definition, [we can realize that] its requisite is belief in the Absolute, and this is contradictory to Rudolf Otto's definition of religion.

Cassirer's Definition

Cassirer¹ viewed religion as a kind of relation essentially natural-metaphorical in contrast to symbolic thinking used in science.²

Assessment

Definitions [of religion] that espouse conflict between science and religion, like Cassirer's, are marred with a fundamental problem which have no correct foundation.

It is regrettable to note that they offer a definition of neither science nor religion. They discuss a subject that draws the attention of common people. Such writers must define religion by taking into account the principal and real elements of religion. In view of the importance of this point, we shall cite an example in order to see whether there are symbolic phenomena or real, as presented to humanity on the basis of revelation, reason and pure natural intuition.

¹ Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945): a German philosopher who developed a philosophy of culture as a theory of symbols founded on a phenomenology of knowledge. [Trans.]

² No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

1. The universe is real and its coming into existence is real as well. So, the universe is a not mental construct and it has come into existence by the ultimate wisdom of God.
2. The creator of this universe is God who is One and Unique.
3. God has all the Attributes of Perfection of the highest order, such as knowledge, power, wisdom, forgiveness, justice, authority, absolute sovereignty over the universe, absolute self-sufficiency, supervision of the universe, preservation of the laws governing the universe, love for the creatures, and the like.
4. God has created mankind for a sublime purpose, and that is union with the Lordly Attraction.
5. One must live according to the rational principles and laws of God, whether in the realm of ‘what is’ or ‘what should be’.
6. Every human being, provided that he or she has not fallen from the level of human nobility and honor due to pollution, treachery and crime, is like any other human being, a single soul in the sight of God.
7. One separated from knowledge and learning—although it is possible for him to acquire them—is deprived of the honor of freewill.
8. In order to know the totality of his being, one must have a relationship with oneself, God, the universe, and fellow human beings. Similarly, in order to know the ‘musts’ and ‘ought-to-be’s’ of rational life, one must refer to revelation. To be more precise, the ultimate bases of all these things are ontological revelation and legislative revelation.
9. The Resurrection and eternal life are real. An addition rational proof of this point is the following:

روزگار و چرخ و انجم سر بسر بازیستی
گرنہ این روز دراز دهر را فرداستی

*The world, fate and stars are all your playthings
Otherwise, this long day of fortune is your tomorrow.¹*

That is, negation of God, the Resurrection and eternal life necessitates negation of all the ‘musts’ and ‘maybes’ of life as well as negation of moral

¹. Nāṣir Khusrū, *Dīwān-e Ash‘ar*, Elegy 241.

and cultural rules vis-à-vis selfishness and self-interest.

10. Human growth and development know no limit. Through utmost efforts and struggle in organizing the four types of relationship with himself, God, the universe, and fellow human beings, and preparing the theoretical and practical answers to the six main questions (Who am I? Where have I come from? Where have I come to? Where am I going? What have I come for? Who is with me?), one can reach far beyond himself and under the radiance of the Lordly Attraction according to the noble verse,

﴿إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾

“Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him will we indeed return.”¹

Is such an original case symbolic or metaphorical in nature?

Sartre's Definition

According to Sartre,² “Religion is man’s scheme for becoming god.”³

Assessment

This is also narrow-mindedness of the highest order of exaggeration and extremism. Since Sartre has drawn public attention by defining religion in a single interesting statement without actually defining religion itself, we can examine and assess this very statement.

There is no notion of “man becoming god” in any of the religions with divine origins, particularly, the three global Abrahamic Faiths, viz. Judaism, Christianity and Islam. What exists is the notion of “man’s admission into the precinct of mercy of God, the Exalted, his entry into the radiance of Lordly Attraction, his union with the farthest bounds of possible perfection within the blossomed human potential,” and “entry into eternal paradise which is the place for the realization of his every possible request.”

It is true that the expression “man’s becoming god” originates from religious and mystic individuals but it must be borne in mind that it means man’s attainment of a majesty, which cannot be compared with any human

¹. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:156.

². Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80): French philosopher, dramatist, novelist, political journalist, and leading exponent of existentialism whose writings reflect his vision of the human being as master of his or her own fate, with each life defined by a person’s actions: “Existence precedes essence.” [Trans.]

³. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, p. 760.

greatness in this life. It is stated in the following quatrain:

چندان برو این ره که دویی برخیزد

Such expressions of mystics are always accompanied by the term ‘heated iron’ (*al-hadīdah al-muhammāt*). Because of its contact with the fire, the iron becomes reddish, acquiring the color of the fire although its essence remains the same. Mawlāwī¹ says,

پیسها یک رنگ گردد اندرو	صبغة الله هست خم رنگ هو
از طرب گوید منم خم لا تلم	چون در آن خم افتاد و گوییش قم
رنگ آتش دارد الا آهنست	آن منم خم خود انا الحق گفتنت
ز آتشی می‌لافد و خامش وشست	رنگ آهن محو رنگ آنشست
پس انا التارست لافش بی زبان	چون بسرخی گشت همچون زر کان

The baptism of Allah is the dyeing-vat of the Absolute God: therein (all) piebald things become of one color.

When he (the mystic) falls into the vat, and you say to him, “Arise,” he says in rapture, “I am the vat: do not blame (me).”

That “I am the vat” is the (same as) saying “I am God”: he has the color of the fire, albeit he is iron.

The color of the iron is naughted in the color of the fire: it (the iron) boasts of (its) fieriness, though (actually) it is like one who keeps silent.²

Dewey's Definition

According to John Dewey,³ “Religion is the pursuit of general and fixed ideals amidst the threats of personal want.”⁴

¹ Mawlāwī or Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn al-Rūmī (1207-1273): the greatest mystic poet in the Persian language and founder of the Mawlawiyyah order of dervishes (“The Whirling Dervishes”). He is famous for his lyrics and his didactic epic, *Mathnawī-ye Ma'nawī* (Spiritual Couplets). [Trans.]

² *Mathnawī-ye Ma'nawī*, Book 2, p. 99, lines 33-35.

See *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 2, lines 1345-1349, p. 141. [Trans.]

³ John Dewey (1859-1952): an American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer. [Trans.]

⁴ Dewey, *A Common Faith*, p. 27. The text is a translation of a translation. [Trans.]

Assessment

In this some elements of the definition of religion cannot be observed. This general concept most probably refers to ardent desire and pursuance of ideals in the form of public propositions such as attainment of perfection, maximization of spiritual benefits, and the like, whereas, considering the individual idiosyncrasies, most of them are deprived of these ideals. The flaw of this definition is that first of all, it has pointed out the extremely varied inclinations and desires of people with the single word ‘ideal’ which has a very broad connotation and it must not be used as it has no scientific value in definitions.

Secondly, there is no mention whatsoever of the principal beliefs of religion such as belief in God, the prophets, the Resurrection, and religious duties and rights. Thirdly, if by “personal want”, Dewey means failure of people to attain those ideals, i.e. ideals useful in this world and within the context of natural happenings, then the said term must be changed because the lofty goal of religion is for man to reach the gateway to eternity which is impossible without God-wariness (*taqwā*). And we know for a fact that *taqwā*, which is protection of the self from pollution of this worldly life and preparing it for the Lordly Attraction in the eternal life, requires sacrifices and tolerance of difficulties, is acquirable and practicable. If Dewey means otherwise, then it must be explained clearly.

The point of Dewey can be interpreted this way: religion means the struggle to attain the general and fixed ideals which answer the inner desire of man to achieve perfection. Unfortunately, however, people are incapable of attaining those ideals, and at least, always under the threat of being unable to attain those ideals. If what Dewey means by the reply to it is that if the religious beliefs of man are immune from error and his efforts for the lofty ideals are anchored in sincerity and God-wariness and far from selfishness, the outcome of this approach can be one of the following three possibilities:

First possibility: the observance of hygiene and truthfulness in speech and thought can lead to physical wellbeing of the person and righteous order of social life. This religious ideal is attainable and discernible.

Second possibility: desirable tranquility, optimism and constant mirth—a kind of joy higher than it cannot be imagined. These ideals are attainable as well as discernible.

Third possibility: gradual perfection of the self and preparation for union and stay in the Lordly Attraction which cannot be imagined and discerned by the self-conscious mind except through momentary flashes in this world. As stated in religious sources and indicated by Ibn Sīnā, the outcome of attainment of this ideal can be understood and realized after [experiencing] separation of the soul from the body. Ibn Sīnā thus says,

And be it known that these occupations (while living), as you know, are reactions and difficulties within the soul which are in constant contact with the body. And if these passions and phenomena are established in the human soul after the soul's separation from the body just as they are established in the soul in the course of life, they will remain fixed with the difference that in the state of living the soul was busy administering the body. So, the resultant pain and joy cannot be felt but after the separation from the body, the soul is no more preoccupied and it comes to itself, sensing all those things...¹

Oxford Dictionary

According to the Oxford Dictionary, religion is man's acknowledgment of a superior unseen power.²

Assessment

This kind of definition cannot be treated as a perfect definition of religion although it does mention some important elements of religion. One reason for the unacceptability of such a definition is that most of the objections of the narrow-minded against religion are in this definition, which mentions only some aspects of religion, without mentioning other aspects that answer those objections. Even this important element—"man's acknowledgment of a superior unseen power"—has a very basic flaw and that is, it limits man's relationship with the 'superior unseen Power' (God) to mere acknowledgment. This is while religion is not mere acknowledgment of God but rather serious acknowledgment of God to be in the radiance of the Axis of His Perfection, demonstrated by acting upon the duties and rights in relation to the four types of relationship, and observing noble characters, which is the only way of curbing selfishness.

¹ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt wa 't-Tanbīhāt*, vol. 3, p. 350.

² *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 410.

Jastrow's Definition

Jastrow¹ writes that religion consists of three things: (1) acknowledgment of the power or powers beyond the scope of our control; (2) sense of subjugation in relation to this power or powers; and (3) quest for connection with this power or powers.

Jastrow also said, “Religion means belief in a power or several powers distinct and dominant to us.” The implications of this belief are as follows: (1) specific organization and laws, (2) distinct practices, and (3) particular systems that relate and connect us to this power or powers.²

Assessment

The first criticism to this definition is that certain powers exist in the universe, such as atomic powers, which we accept but never regard religion as their basis. Not every power beyond human control is an element of religion. Belief in the Power which is infinite and possesses grace, justice, wisdom, creativity, absolute perfection and the like and is called ‘God’ is one of the pillars of religion.

The second criticism to this definition is that the sense of subjugation in relation to this power must be interpreted correctly. In relating to God, by sensing His infinite power and majesty, man feels overawed by His power, and it is not like the fear of a weak animal in relation to a stronger predator. Jastrow disregards all acts of worship, supplication and communion with God, which are based upon affection, acquaintance, love, inclination and devotion to Him.

In religion there is a set of specific systems, which pave the ground for human perfection. Generally speaking, it must be stated that religious conviction starts with the first call of wakefulness, i.e. man’s consciousness of being part of a purposeful universe that exists through the wisdom and will of the Exalted and extends to the celestial world which situates the entire human life—individual and social—in the Axis of Lordly Station. Obviously, the dimensions and forms of such a thing are extremely diverse.

¹ Most probably, it refers to Robert Jastrow (1925-2008), an American astronomer, physicist and cosmologist. [Trans.]

² *Bunyād-e Dīn wa Jāme ‘ehshināsī*, p. 37.

Chapter 4

Psychological and Sociological Definitions of Religion

Introduction

Today, religion is defined and religious phenomena explained according to psychological and sociological factors and effects. For this reason, an examination of psychological and sociological approaches is of immense importance. Eleven psychological definitions shall be assessed in this chapter.

The definitions of William James, Freud, and Jung from among the macro-theorist psychologists, and Schleiermacher, Samuel King, Karl Barth,¹ Frazer, and Kauffman from among the modern scholars of religion will be discussed. Because of being masqueraded as a modern psychological perspective, the definition of William James² shall be assessed in detail.

Psychological Definitions of Religion

William James' Definition

1. His Philosophy

William James (1842-1910) the famous American psychologist and philosopher was a pragmatist philosopher and the founder of the functionalist school in psychology which was basically contrary to William Wundt's³ psychological school of structuralism. Among the most important works of James are the follows:

1. *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 volumes (1890): They form a classical piece of work that has connected philosophical psychology of the 19th century to the scientific psychology of the 20th century.
2. *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902): In this work, his

¹. Karl Barth (1886-1968): a Swiss Reformed theologian considered one of the most important Christian thinkers of the 20th century. [Trans.]

². William James (1842-1910): a pioneering American psychologist and philosopher trained as a medical doctor. Among his best-known works is *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. [Trans.]

³. Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt (1832-1920): a German medical doctor, psychologist, physiologist, philosopher, and professor, known today as one of the founding figures of modern psychology. [Trans.]

psychological and philosophical inclinations coincide to explain religious life. He describes religious phenomena, and presents a philosophical analysis of the importance of these phenomena.¹

3. Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (1907): This work contains a theory about the truth mixed with his functionalist psychology.²

In *Pragmatism*, James finds a way to unite science and religion saying, the touchstone of all truths is experience and the religious experience of every person is a phenomenon that must undoubtedly be accepted as a reality. These ideas led him to pluralism in the personal and moral sense but not in the metaphysical sense.

According to pragmatism, the touchstone of every belief is the nature of change that it brings to one's personal life.³

2. His Definition of Religion

1. The variety in the definitions of religion shows that the word 'religion' does not refer to the single subject or something specific or determined. It is rather general in nature and refers to a set of things.

2. From the outset, we must declare that we will not reach a point of finding out the essence of religion but rather obtain its features and effects according to status.

I can explain an aspect of 'religion', but cannot find a categorical definition of religion that is acceptable to both friend and foe. Thus, religion refers to the effects feelings and happenings that take place in a person in his inner world, distant from all attachments, making him realize the connection between him and that which he calls 'God'. In this definition, religion is referred to as 'religious experience'.

With this definition of religion we do not have many ideological differences.

¹ Part of this work (six out of 20 chapters) has been translated into Persian. William James, *Dīn wa Rawān*, trans. Mahdī Qā'inī (Tehran: IntIshārāt wa āmūzesh-e Inqilābī Islāmī, 1372 AHS).

² William James, *Pragmatism*, trans. 'Abd al-Karīm Rashīdiyān (Tehran: Intishārāt wa āmūzesh-e Inqilābī Islāmī, 1372 AHS).

³ Israel Skefler, *Four Pragmatists*, trans. Muhsin Ḥakimī (Tehran: Nashr-e Markaz, 1366 AHS), p. 134.

Possibly, there is difference on only one subject and that is on the term ‘divine matter’.

Therefore, religion refers to ‘human reaction to a set of things’—reaction which generally happens in the life of a person (in contrast to temporary reaction).

Assessment

“From the outset, we must declare that we can not reach a point of finding out the truth or essence of religion...” It is impossible to know the essence of religion because it is related to the human soul which is connected to God, and both are not physical entities. We also know that the wide variety of definitions is not limited to religion. It includes all human aspects which are somehow related to the universe, the human psyche, intellection and conscience; like, beauty, culture, happiness, the delight of justice, God-wariness, mystical unraveling (*iktishāfāt*), the sense of helplessness, oppression committed by others, injustice, ignorance, and the like.

A scholar of religion chooses a definition which affirms his mental and environmental conditions. The definitions of ‘culture’ exceed 150,¹ according to Alfred Kroeber² and Clyde Kluckhohn³ and are due to the same point we have stated. If we try to know religion only through inner human perceptions and define it accordingly, distinguishing these perceptions from illusions, imaginations and various religious motives is very difficult, if not totally impossible. For instance, to differentiate signs of selfishness from the ardent desire for perfection is indeed difficult, except by applying the pure conscience whose preservation in its pure state is, in itself, very difficult.

And if we limit ourselves to external phenomena, that appeared in the external world, through religious motives, signs or symbols, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of external phenomena have not categorically presented their causes, conditions and goals because they have numerous possibilities in view of the purpose of their Originator. This perfectly clear example, will explain this subject

¹. To be exact, Kroeber and Kluckhohn compiled a list of 164 definitions of culture. See *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1952). [Trans.]

². Alfred Louis Kroeber (1876-1960): considered one of the most influential figures in American anthropology in the first half of the twentieth century. [Trans.]

³. Clyde Kluckhohn (1905-60): an American anthropologist and social theorist. [Trans.]

According to history, our war with such-and-such nation happened at such-and-such period whose causes based on sensory observations were not mentioned so we cannot point them out as the cause of war. Let us assume that we went along with war experts, and we used every means possible in order to identify the causes of war and we did not find out anything except individual corpses and mass graves, remnants of war equipment and weapons, and other physical manifestations of war. Obviously, through these observations alone we could not understand the cause or motives of the said war—economic, territorial disputes, revenge, selfishness, or world conquest.

For this reason, we argue that our etiological knowledge of such wars does not go beyond guess and probability. In order to arrive at a definition of religion which is comprehensive and inclusive to a considerable extent, we have no option but to consider the two basic realms, inner and outer.

One is the inner reality which religious people accept whether through intellection (*ta'aqqul*) or intuition (*shuhūd*), and interpret and make sense of their lives through the motives behind that reality.

The other is the outer reality such as acts of worship, discharging of duties and rights. These appear in the external world due to inward motives.

Let us consider the realities and activities in the inner world of religious people. Among them are traces of sound mind, innate nature (*fitrah*) and pure conscience (*wijdān*); the purposefulness of the universe, existence of God who is the Creator, eternal life, and pressing need for God and His will.

3. Peace of mind, which emanates from [the belief in] the purposefulness of the universe and its order

4. Taking life seriously and purposefully

5. Acceptance of general values, such as moral legislative principles essential for removing defects and supplementing merits in life.

6. Preparing convincing answers to the six questions (1. Who am I? Where I have come from? Where have I come? With who am I? Where shall I go? What have I come for?)

7. The general essence of the acts of worship is to establish contact with God the Glorious, and to be in His Axis

8. Sacrifice and selflessness based upon the legislative will (*irādeh-ye tashrī'i*) of God in fighting against oppression, ignorance, poverty, and

violation of the rights of the weak

9. Acceptance of the unity of mankind by citing the bases of this unity, such as the unity of their Creator (God), the unity of goal pursued by everybody, the unity of the natural essence of their origin, i.e. dust, the unity of the Origin of their soul, and other common elements.

10. Sufferings and hardships do not bring about inner imbalance, pessimism and mental agitation to religious people.

11. With a lofty goal in life along the path of “We belong to God and to Him we shall return,” the religious person thinks of himself in the presence of God.

12. One of the significant features of religion is that the religious person regards all occupations in life as a form of worship as movement towards the said direction (“We belong to God and to Him we shall return”). A worker who is busy producing a product in a farm or factory is busy in worship with that sense of movement. Every pupil, student, scholar, or anyone who is engaged in an intellectual pursuit to establish connection with realities and set them for the use of people in material and spiritual life from the most basic level up to the highest, is in a state of worship. Therefore, places of worship that are built for establishing connection with God are meant for worship and direct communion with God, and not that the place for worship is limited to them.

13. The religious person regards as trust every distinction he or she acquires—from material things to the loftiest spiritual matters—as well as power he or she earns, that must all be utilized for the material and spiritual welfare of humanity.

14. For the religious person, knowledge is the brightest lamp at his or her disposal for the discovery of realities and he or she must try his or her best to make this lamp as bright as possible.

15. From the religious perspective, art along the path of ‘rational life’ is one of the most sublime means in life.

16. Management or leadership in Islam means administration of a set of members organized for the movement toward material and spiritual felicity, and the manager or leader is like a physically perfect or complete person who is in charge of managing his or her limbs, faculties and natural potential.

17. Apart from religion, no school of thought or way of thinking has been able to formulate the ultimate step and real factor to regulate man's selfishness, which has drowned his account in tears and blood. Only faith and acknowledgment of God and acting upon His commands are effective in curing this fatal disease (selfishness), and nothing else.

18. Most constructive movements in history have required a collective action and sacrifices are consciously religious, or as stimulated by programs that promised 'absolute' things to people and indirectly incited them, such as the absolute concepts of felicity (*sa 'ādah*), humanity (*insāniyyah*), justice ('*adl*), freedom (*hurriyyah*), and even homeland (*watan*). If one had no expectation to attain the absolute, he would not have offered his life for them.

The third refers to the phenomena and events that happen in the world as motivated by religion. Such phenomena and events can be classified as follows:

Buildings: This type of phenomena in itself has different kinds:

1. Places of worship like mosques, churches, synagogues, Hindu and Buddhist temples, Zoroastrian temples, and the like: These buildings, built with the salient features they have, proves that their construction has been motivated by religious inclination. Since the earliest days of human life on earth, places of worship have been built having distinct features, it will not be a mistake to understand that they have been built for worship and express religious tendencies.

2. Structures whose religious motive has been identified by means of special inscriptions and sketches on them. Since time immemorial up to now, there have been a lot of hospitals, water reservoirs, bridges, and other structures in which the religious motives of those who built them have been clearly recorded in their respective epigraphs or in handwritten works such as deeds of endowment and testaments. For example, the deed of endowment of Sultan Qalāwun¹ Hospital in which this line has been written: "This hospital has been built by Malik Mansūr Sayf al-Dīn Sultān Qalāwun, sincerely for the sake of Allah."²

¹ Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwun al-Ṣāliḥī (also Qalā'ūn or Kalavun) (c. 1222-1290): the seventh Mamluk sultan who ruled Egypt from 1279 to 1290. [Trans.]

² Built by Sultān Qalāwun in Cairo, Egypt, this hospital was one of the most majestic hospitals during the Middle Ages, and it had been operational for about

Special acts performed as a form of worship for the sake of seeking nearness to God. Because of the special importance given by people to religion throughout history, history has recorded the quality and quantity of most devotional acts performed with the intention of seeking nearness to God. Nowadays, through essential research, the quality and quantity of devotional acts performed by different religious societies can be examined. The main goal of man's inclination to religion is to meet his being's innate needs and set himself in the axis of Divine Perfection. For these needs, he strives hard in both the inner and outer realms.

Yet, James said, "Thus, religion refers to the effects, feelings and happenings that take place in a person in his inner world distant from all attachments such that he realizes that there is a connection between him and that which he calls 'God'." The attainment of the said connection and those effects and feelings are something common to every religious person. As such, it cannot be asserted that religion is something personal.

Carl Gustav Jung's Definition

1. Jung and His Thought

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was the son of a pastor of the Swiss Reformed Church. He spent his life studying philosophy, anthropology, alchemy, and finally psychology. He was the founder of analytical psychology or the Zurich School in contrast to Freud's First School of Vienna, after separating from Freud. Maddi described analytical psychology as a blending of physical and metaphysical psychology.¹ This is because the most important element of analytical psychology is inquiry through meta-science and philosophy for the attainment of the infinite horizon of humanity.

By coining the 'collective unconscious,'² Jung helped humanity achieve,

four centuries.

¹ Salvatore R. Maddi, *Personality Theories: A Comparative Analysis*, 6th ed. (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1996).

² Collective unconscious: a term of analytical psychology, coined by Carl Jung, proposed to be a part of the unconscious mind, expressed in humanity and all life forms with nervous systems, and describes how the structure of the psyche autonomously organizes experience. See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_Unconscious. [Trans.]

what is possible through pure empirical knowledge.¹

2. Religion

Jung talked more about religion as “undoubtedly the superior and most universal expression of the human soul.”² In the 19 volumes of the collection of his works, it is rare to find a treatise not dealing with issues related to religion. Among his works on religion are the following:

*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*³ (1965): it is regarded as his religious testament showing contrasting portraits of him: religious experiences full of love for God and serious criticism of the deities and the church.

Psychology and Religion (1938): it is a collection of his speeches about the relationship of scientific psychology and religion.

Paracelsica (1942): in this book, he deals with alchemy, psychology and religion.⁴

Psychology and Alchemy (1944): it contains his reconstruction of Christian thought and a new reading of the principles of belief in the Lord’s Supper.

Answer to Job (1952): It is a famous work containing Jung’s contradictory statements on a theological issue.

Four Imaginal Forms (?): In this work, Jung discussed four possible figures; he examined motherhood, rebirth, soul, and guile. He allocated the third part to an analysis of *Sūrat al-Kahf* of the Noble Qur’ān.

3. His Definition of Religion

Jung said, “Before I talk about religion, it is necessary for me to explain first the meaning of this term which I believe is consistent with its root word in Latin *religere*, meaning reflection by the conscience with total attention. It is what Otto duly called ‘sacred and luminous thing’.

¹. Under the heading “Introduction to Jung’s Theology,” I have discussed in detail Jung and his ideas. This paper has been published in *Qabasāt Magazine*, nos. 5-6, pp. 54-140.

². *Fu’ād-e Rūḥānī*, Tehran: Shirkat-e Sahāmi-ye Kitābhī-ye Jibī, 1370 AHS.

³. Parwin Farāmarzī (trans.), *Khāṭirāt, Yāddāshthī wa Indishehhī* (Mashhad: Astān Quds Razavī, 1376 AHS).

⁴. Parwin Farāmarzī (trans.), *Paracelsica* (Mashhad: Astān Quds Razavī, 1368 AHS).

Therefore, religion means a state of watchfulness, remembrance and close attention to powerful elements to which man attributes overwhelming power and idealistically portrays them as spirits, devils, gods, laws, or imaginal forms (ancient figures).¹

In fact, the term ‘religion’ signifies a particular state of the conscience, which changes due to the perception of the quality of sanctity and luminosity.²

Assessment

Like William James, in this definition, Jung points out that the core axis of religion is the establishment of contact with God that necessitates attainment of the quality of sacredness and luminosity.

Yet, this description cannot be considered a complete definition of religion. It is not only because it excludes those effects and feelings included by William James in his definition of religion, but also because it disregards the second basic part of religion which is search and practice on the basis of connection with God and attainment of the quality of sacredness and luminosity.

A general objection to this one-dimensional definition is that it deprives humanity of its essential need for religion, for by knowing the unique advantages that religion offers through a rational and purposeful life, the caravan of humanity can enjoy a mirthful and splendid life.

Herder's Definition

Herder³ was among the first to consider religion as something inward and personal that relies on mythology and poetry.

Assessment

Throughout history, many people have offered their lives for a cause. How can these people explain these sacrifices through poetry and mythology?

In defining religion, one can possibly use poetry and myths but it is different

¹. Farāmarzī, *Paracelsica*, p. 8.

². *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³. Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803): a German philosopher, theologian, poet, and literary critic who was associated with the periods of Enlightenment, Sturm und Drang, and Weimar Classicism. [Trans.]

from treating poetry and mythology as the foundation of religion.

Secondly, just because the religious beliefs of some primitive people relied upon mythology and poetry (something which is not yet proven), this does not prove that the religious beliefs and practices of so many people, with thousands of profound scholars, sages and thinkers that founded civilizations, are based upon poetry and mythology. Should we regard the religious beliefs and practices of Avicennas, Fārābī,¹ Averroes,² Bīrūnī,³ Ibn Khaldūn,⁴ Rūmī,⁵ Mullā Ṣadras,⁶ Mīr Dāmād,⁷ and the like from the East to West, as relying upon myths and poetry?

The argument of Herder is similar to the argument that the ancient Greek

¹. Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (known in the West as Alpharabius) (c. 872-950/951 CE): a Muslim polymath (in the fields of cosmology, logic, music, psychology, and sociology) and one of the greatest scientists and philosophers of the world during his time. [Trans.]

². Abū 'l-Walid Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Rushd better known as Ibn Rushd, and in European literature as Averroes (1126-98): an Andalusian Muslim polymath; a master of Aristotelian philosophy, Islamic philosophy, Islamic theology, Malīkī law and jurisprudence, logic, psychology, politics, Arabic music theory, and the sciences of medicine, astronomy, geography, mathematics, physics, and celestial mechanics. [Trans.]

³. Abū Rayhān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Bīrūnī (973-1048): a Persian Muslim scholar and polymath of the 11th century. [Trans.]

⁴. Ibn Khaldūn (Abū Zayd 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn al-Ḥaḍramī) (1332/732 AH-1406/808 AH): a versatile Muslim scholar considered to be a forerunner of several social science disciplines as well as modern economics. [Trans.]

⁵. Maowlāwī or Maowlānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (1207-73): the greatest mystic poet in the Persian language and founder of the Mawlawiyyah order of dervishes ("The Whirling Dervishes"). He is famous for his lyrics and his didactic epic, *Mathnawī-ye Mahnawī* (Spiritual Couplets). [Trans.]

⁶. Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī (1572-1641), better known as Mullā Sadrī or Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn: the foremost representative of the Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) School of Islamic philosophy whose magnum opus is *Al-Asfār al-Arba'ah* (*The Four Journeys*). [Trans.]

⁷. Mīr Dāmād, known also as Mīr Muḥammad Bāqir Astarābādī (d. 1631/2): an Iranian philosopher founder of the School of Isfahān noted as the Third Teacher (*mu'allim al-thālith*) after Aristotle and Fārābī, and foremost figure (together with his student Mullā Ṣadrā) of the cultural renaissance of Iran undertaken under the Safavid dynasty. [Trans.]

theory on the body elements constituting water, fire, soil, and air, and the theories of great contemporary physicists on the extraordinarily basic foundations of nature, such as the studies on quantum mechanics, as being one and the same!

Secondly, let us assume that religion inwardly and personally ends up in mythology and poetry (pleasant feelings based upon selection and elimination in the realities of the world). Is the relation of perfectly divine religion to mythology and poetry more logical, or the relation of multidimensional perfect man to unicellular organisms?

You cannot biologically, physiologically, psychologically and mentally find the position of progressive human beings of today by taking hundreds of wonderfully potent unicellular organisms. In the same manner, you cannot find a unicellular organism with a religious spirit like faith, which can attract the attention of the world with the extraordinary potential it has. Can you witness the aesthetic aptitude, which sees a thousand types of beauty in a single reality, in a unicellular organism?

Schleiermacher's Definition

Schleiermacher¹ connects religion with feelings, particularly feelings of attachment. He presents his definition of religion as the basis of absolute attachment.²

Assessment

Two important points in this definition [of religion] need attention:

First: it is true that the basis of religion is related to a feeling of attachment to the absolute, but it must be borne in mind that this attachment does not perpetuate man's weakness. It is with this attachment that theistic people have made great strides in founding civilizations and spearheading human progress and development. This potent movement is the essential condition of all transformative activities throughout history. Thus, whenever man has taken a positive step forward, be it in law, politics, economics, ethics, or culture, he has initially adopted the absolute as his motto or goal, such as man and humanity, perfection and progress in human felicity, and by

¹. Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834): a German theologian and philosopher known for his impressive attempt to reconcile the criticisms of the Enlightenment with traditional Protestant orthodoxy. [Trans.]

². Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, p. 12; *Religion*, p. 275.

proving the necessity of people's attachment to this absolute. Then he has achieved collective action.

Second: this thinker has limited himself in defining religion by stating the motive of religion as a feeling of attachment to God, without mentioning anything about other aspects of the definition.

Feuerbach's Definition

“According to Feuerbach,¹ the essence of religion is the expression of human qualities. Auguste Comte² and Feuerbach were in search of a new religion for humanity.”³

Assessment

For Feuerbach, man magnifies the traits he has, such as compassion and love for a heavenly being. That is, ‘God’ is a product of man, and does not exist outside man’s mentality and feeling.

This theory defines religion as a mere imaginary phenomenon and mental activity. It cannot be imagined that one of the scholars of the East and West, nay one of the conscious men would make such a ‘God’ for himself and worship ‘Him’. Islam emphasizes that every creature perceives God with all His Attributes. It is true that the existence of God can be proved by observing the law and order in the universe, but a relationship with that Sacred Being is intuitive and not imaginary or mere mental reflection. Definitely, the likes of Feuerbach have not studied the proofs substantiating the existence of God and the intuitive ways of perceiving Him found in the sayings of the pioneers of knowledge and wisdom.

Kaufmann's Definition

According to Kaufmann,⁴ religion originated from man’s aspiration to elevate himself.⁵ According to this view, man is an ape that wants to become ‘God’. Whether he upholds [certain] ideals or strives to attain perfection,

¹ Ludwig Andreas von Feuerbach (180472): a German philosopher and anthropologist whose thought was influential in the development of Marxist dialectic. [Trans.]

² Auguste Comte (1798-1857): a French philosopher and social theorist. [Trans.]

³ *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion*, p. 647.

⁴ Walter Arnold Kaufmann (1921-80): a German-American philosopher, translator, and poet. [Trans.]

⁵ Walter Kaufmann, *Critique of Religion and Philosophy*, pp. 354-359.

man is an inebriated ape of God.

Assessment

This definition is marred with numerous problems. We shall mention some of them:

1. How did such an impressive concept find its way into the mind of an ape? Is the concept of God as the Essence with infinite knowledge, power, life, grace, beauty, and glory, manifested in the human heart and mind also conceived in man's relation to apes? How do they prove this claim?
2. Has an ape with such characteristics existed in the generation of apes of the past millennia?
3. Mr. Kaufmann must be aware that

We know very well that most paleontologists relate man's evolution to at least one million years ago; that is, to the fourth geological epoch. The newest discoveries in the paleontology of the human race, state that human origins are extremely complex and ambiguous.

New discoveries, show numerous and multifaceted branches that came into being and existed for a while and faded away, and only a set of them survived and initially lead up to the *Homo sapiens*, or the rational man and precursor of today's human being. Prior to this, paleontology maintained that today's human being is from the species of ape-like humans or *pithecanthropus* that came into being by the evolution of the Neanderthal man and then the Cro-Magnon man. Today, after numerous discoveries in Europe, Asia and Africa, it has become clear that the obtained fossils do not belong to a specific single species but to, at least, four different species, and our ancestor, that is, in reality, the ancestor of the 'rational' Cro-Magnon man is not the human, Neanderthal or Heidelberg man. And we are neither from the ape-like *pithecanthropus* humans nor from *sinanthropus* up to the genus prior to the 'rational man', whose fossils are absolutely unknown and unidentifiable.¹

4. Kaufmann has no explanation as to why out of tens, nay hundreds of religious precepts this ape has limited itself to the desire to become 'God'. Is

¹. Pierre Rousseau, *Tārikh-e Ṣanāye' wa Ikhtirā'āt* (*Histoire des techniques et des inventions*), trans. Hasan Saffārī, pp. 19-20.

there any observed phenomenon or gesture of apes, which indicates this desire to become ‘God’?

Samuel King’s Definition

For Samuel King,¹ religion means faith in a supernatural or mysterious power caused by fear, awe and reverence.²

Assessment

1. Like many other definitions of religion, this definition touches on the root and the motive behind professing religion, and not on religion itself.

2. Feeling the greatness of God, the Glorious, and the sovereignty of that Sacred Essence over creation, including human beings, does not arouse fear and awe like that of a weak animal, a cat against a merciless preying beast that needs to kill the weak for its own food. This is because fear and awe, as we have said, are related to a need of a strong being for a weak being. Meanwhile, the religions with divine origin regard God, the Glorious, as the fountainhead of existence of all creatures, Who loves them, desires their perfection, has provided them with the most excellent means of understanding, such as the intellect, the heart and the conscience. God is not the source of fear and awe. The source of fear, awe and terror is man himself, whose selfishness deprive him of divine grace.

3. The said power does not exist in the Abrahamic Faith (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) but in mythology, magic and the like. Of course, it can be said that there are metaphysical truths that cannot be understood with average human knowledge, and there is this lack of understanding about the nature of ‘soul’ (*rūh*) and even the ‘I’ and other fundamental truths.

The same is true of the statement of Robert Louis Stevenson,³ who regards religion as the natural involuntary reaction to the extraordinary, mysterious and fearsome phenomena of nature.⁴

¹ Samuel King: a Presbyterian minister and one of the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. [Trans.]

² No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

³ Most probably, it refers to Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-94), a Scottish novelist, poet, essayist and travel writer. [Trans.]

⁴ No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

Goldziher's Definition

According to Goldziher,¹ religion is a manifestation of the human soul.²

Assessment

This is one of the most common definitions of religion, but in view of the fact that the “manifestations of human soul” are so varied, this definition can not render any help in knowing religion. In fact, we can say that Goldziher refers to the manifestation of soul, which only appears in professing a connection with God’s Absolute Perfection, and is not any inward manifestation.

Rainach's Definition

According to Rainach, religion means the totality of insinuations as the substitute of using our power and talents freely.

Assessment

This definition refers to the inner insinuations that prevent us from freely using our power and talents. If it is really so, we have no objection to it because the said writer has presented his personal spiritual state in a scientific manner! It is such views that have expelled social sciences and introduced, in their stead, technological phenomena that are profitable to human life, sacrificing life before their altar. The following points are worth pondering over:

1. Were all the religiously motivated scientific advancements in the arena of science and technology in Muslim societies (from the second half of the second century up to the end of the first half of the fifth century, AH) and saved science from definite extinction, and acknowledged by a number of Western scholars, mere insinuations?
2. Did all the campaigns waged by Islam against ignorance and savagery arise from insinuation?
3. Were all the executions of justice by Islam, as acknowledged by Islamic history scholars (like Gustave Le Bon³), resulting in its astonishing advancement and spread. insinuations?

¹ Ignác (Yitzhaq Yehuda) Goldziher, better known as Ignaz Goldziher (1850-1921): was a Hungarian orientalist of Jewish heritage. [Trans.]

² No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

³ Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931): a French social psychologist, sociologist, and amateur physicist. [Trans.]

4. Was the constant pursuit of sublime perfection by the martyrs, who offered their lives, selfish insinuations?

How we wish the likes of Rainach would have spent a day studying the record of Islam and then attempted to define religion.

Rupele's Definition

In defining religion, Rupele says, “Religion means human life’s dependence on a mysterious soul to which man wishes to be attached, feeling a sense of unity or oneness with it and expressing delight for this feeling.”¹

Assessment

This definition expresses an important element of religion which is human life’s dependence on a sublime truth. However, belief in the term ‘mysterious soul’ for God, is that of the cause for the effect, and the soul does not necessarily mean ‘God’ although it is a sublime truth.

If the attribution of ‘mysterious’ to God means ‘of unknown nature’, then it is correct, for although the human mind has great potential, it is incapable of perceiving that Sacred Essence. However, understanding the concept of Divine Attributes and possession of Divine light as a result of purification of the self is something possible, and more or less, all free people possess such understanding.

Frazer's Definition

In defining religion, Frazer² says, “By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and human life.”³

Assessment

This definition has pointed out man’s quest for perfection by cajoling greater truths and powers, which are above everything and administer nature and human life. Yet, it does not give any explanation about those powers, and in particular, about the said truth (the great power which Frazer definitely

¹ No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

² Sir James George Frazer (1854-1941): a Scottish social anthropologist influential in the early stages of the modern studies of mythology and comparative religion. [Trans.]

³ James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (New York: Bartleby.com, 2000), chap. 4, “Magic and Religion,” <http://www.bartleby.com/196/9.html> (accessed: January 2011). [Trans.]

means God).

Such a definition is like saying, if defining science, that science means the relationship between the discovery and the realities! Just as this meaning does not give any clear definition of science, so does such a definition of religion.

Koestenbaum's Definition

In the opinion of Koestenbaum,¹ "Religion refers to man's endeavor to do something for his hopeless state of restraint."²

Assessment

One of the essentials of religion is that it can rid one of the state of hopelessness arising from ones existential limitations and defects. This does not mean that through religion, man condoles with his defects and limitations in the world of imagination. In fact, life based on religion gives man a sense of exhilaration in existential dimensions. Due to an attachment to Sublime Perfection, he is released from any form of defect and limitation.

Freud's Definition

According to Freud, religion signifies man's struggle to find heavenly consolations to help him overcome frightening events in life. He also views religion as a child and his experience as having a role in general illnesses.³

Assessment

In this expression, Freud highlights three points as the definition of religion:

First point: religion is a heavenly consolation aimed at helping man to overcome the fearful events in life. It must be stated that this subject is not the meaning or part of the definition of religion but rather, one of the essentials of religion.

به حلابت بخورم زهر که شاهد ساقی است به ارادت برم درد که درمان هم از وست⁴

¹ Most probably it refers to Peter Koestenbaum, founder and Chairman of Philosophy-in-Business and the Koestenbaum Institute, who has applied his knowledge of philosophy to business, leadership, management, marketing, and strategic thinking. [Trans.]

² Koestenbaum, *Religion in the Fraction of Phenomenal*, p. 18.

³ Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, pp. 57-58.

⁴ Sa‘dī, *Mawā‘iz*, ghazal 13.

ای دل ار سیل فنا بنیاد هستی برکند چون تو را نوح است کشتیان ز طوفان غم مخور^۱
 سعدیا گر بکند سیل فنا خانه عمر دل قوی دار که بنیاد بقا محکم ازوست^۲
 در غم ما روزها با روزها پاک نیست^۳

Second point: in order to assess Freud's definition of religion a general view of his motives and ways of reasoning are of immense importance. Freud does not give importance and credence to personality and its defense against sexual instinct's force and activities, but interprets all human aspects on the basis of this instinct; its suppression or indulgence! After reaching the pinnacle of popularity and acquiring a sort of religious sanctity by the use of the label 'Freudism', he turned responsive capability to incapability. However, the weakness of this theory became known to all and sundry, and apart from classifying what is 'conscious', 'unconscious', and 'semi-conscious', which was a plausible pretext, the themes of this school were subject to serious criticism. Apart from this, which in itself has a long story, there is an extremely worthwhile issue about him. He demolished the foundations of all his theories about moral and religious questions.

His expression is as follows: "I always find myself annoyed by raising non-weighable (indescribable) issues and I always acknowledge this annoyance!"⁴ Having an allergy for moral issues and meta-quantity truths, can one rely on his definition of religion? Or, can one consider his negative views about religion and other sublime meta-quantity human values as having any scientific value?

Third point: the definition given by Freud for religion—"religion signifies man's struggle to find heavenly consolations to help him overcome frightening events in life"—states only one benefit of religion, i.e. strength to deal with frightening events, and not the main goal or purpose of religion. For Freud, there is no room at all for spiritual delight and sense of solidarity with other human beings through religion, because he was afraid of raising non-weighable issues! For Freud, there is no room for any constructive services that man has rendered motivated by religion for freedom, justice

¹. Hāfiẓ, *Ghazaliyāt*, ghazal 255.

². Sa‘dī, *Mawā‘iz*, ghazal 13.

³. Rūmī,

⁴. Edgar Pesch, *Andishehhī-ye Freud (Pensee de Freud)*, p. 92.

and realization of human rights throughout history, for raising non-weighable issues would annoy him!

Bultmann

For Bultmann,¹ religion refers to man's ardent desire to escape from the world by theoretically discovering a realm beyond this world.²

Assessment

Some individuals do have such an ardent desire, but this statement is not correct as a definition of religion as it refers only to one dimension of religion, i.e. the ardent desire to soar from the physical world to the metaphysical one. Firstly, in this definition there is no mention of the lofty goal of life, its relation to man and the dimension of religious rights and duties.

Secondly, there is a categorical status of Resurrection in the above definition.

Thirdly, it disregards the four types of man's relationship; with himself, God, the universe, and his fellow human beings.

Fourthly, there is no doubt that man has an ardent desire to establish a rational relationship with this world, which is a product of a healthy mind or conscience. Religion persistently urges its appearance, and not a physical escape from the world. For a religious person, to be situated in this world and to pass by, is a divine law which one must not oppose.

Belief in a world beyond this physical world is a fundamental pillar of belief of the divine religions. Similarly, there is no doubt that the said world is the place of absolute freedom from physical constraints. However, escaping from this world, from struggle and evolution of personality, to that eternal, spiritual world is against divine wisdom and will. This world is like an observatory to look at the Infinite and strive for it. Granted that man's ardent desire to escape from this world to the other world is included in the definition of religion, still it is just part of the definition and not its totality.

Sociological Definitions of Religion

Sociological definitions refer to the definitions of religion based upon social causes and effects and reduce it into a social phenomenon. In this kind of

¹ Rudolf Karl Bultmann (1884-1976) was a German theologian of Lutheran background. [Trans.]

² Rudolf Bultmann, *Myth and Christianity*, p. 50.

definitions, three main definitions shall be considered:

Durkheim's Definition

For Durkheim,¹ “A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, i.e., things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite in one single moral community, called a Church, all those who adhere to them.”²

According to Durkheim, the original ‘sacred’ is social, because society nurtures the individual and generates the ‘sacred’ feeling in him.

Assessment

The defects of this definition are as follows:

1. The first part of Durkheim’s definition of religion is that it is “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things”. This is a good explanation of the nature of the elements of religion; the systematic and unified organization of a set of beliefs and practices as duties related to sacred truths. However, it does not give any explanation about the identity of those beliefs and practices. For this reason, we can say that this is also one of the defective definitions of religion.
2. The interpretation of religion indicated by the phrase “that is, things which must be prohibited and set aside” mentions only the religious prohibitions. In the religion of Islam, their prohibition is due to the physical or spiritual harm they cause man, and not prohibitions observed in taboo moral systems³ of primitive societies.
3. In the religion of Islam, a moral community or an assembly in a structure called mosque has no specific distinction. It is identified as an *ummah*. Thus, there is no specific country, place or structure for the religious activity.
4. Another clarification needed in this definition is: What does it mean by ‘beliefs’? In some religions, false beliefs have found ways of duping people. In religions with divine origin, there are some theological, moral and social precepts whose origin is divine revelation.

¹ David Émile Durkheim (1858-1917): a French sociologist who formally established the academic discipline and, with Karl Marx and Max Weber, is commonly cited as the principal architect of modern social science. [Trans.]

² Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1912), Book 1, Ch. 1. [Trans.]

³ It refers to those prohibitions that are not based on any logical cause or reason.

The problem with Durkheim is that he regards the Sacred Being, i.e. God, as a social principle, believing that the society is the cause of man's inclination to God. That is, he believes that society generates the belief in something sacred, belief in God. In other words, Durkheim does not give any credence to the individual; he gives all credence to society and no identity for the individual, whereas, it is not so. Man has his own potential and society can only be the agent of his growth or diminution.

The theory of Durkheim takes the influence in society to an extreme. It is not farfetched to say that his theory considerably contributes to the statement, "Man has history and has no institution", which writers, like Sartre, feed to the common people. Durkheim has confused expedient effect with causative effect. As a final point, he must address the negation of an individual's distinct identity, potential, and problems, such as the following:

1. How to explain revolutions, that have frequented history, and why they are contrary to the natural course of societies (otherwise, they would not be labeled 'revolution')?
2. The basic human sense of freewill and responsibility is nothing but an illusion according to Durkheim's theory. To assume that the individual is constructed by its own society means that he must compulsorily accept the fatalistic construction of society.
3. How to interpret the discoveries and inventions presented for the first time in society, considering the incapability of society in bringing them into existence and even in determining most of them?

Feaver's Definition

In the book "*Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective*," J. Clayton Feaver¹ has defined religion in this way: plainly speaking, the term 'religion' is the content or a pillar of human experience. Sacred institutions, speech, beliefs, and writings are controllable observables. Moreover, more religions claim that they are more than a set of empirical data. Inner dispositions, values and fundamental approaches to life are also religious phenomena. Religion (or at least, most religious people) asserts that it is more than a set of data among other data, and more than a certain type of experience among other experiences. Religion asserts that it is the truth, and in their most

¹. J. Clayton Feaver (1911-95): an American philosopher-educator and ordained Presbyterian minister from Oklahoma City. [Trans.]

advanced form, most religions claim to be the ultimate truth in close harmony with the ultimate reality. Definitely, religion does not claim that it is purely a rational understanding of reality. Thinking may possibly be for a secondary feeling or intention as most religious teachers would evaluate. To be more precise, religion entails reflection on the meaning of the world for a better human existence. Religion entails taking into account the possibility that something at the center of reality responds to and satisfies man's needs in life and realizes his destiny.

Assessment

Certain points in this definition are worthy of attention:

1. Among the definitions of religion being offered, this definition is relatively more accurate and has greater merit.
2. That "religion is the content or a pillar of human experience", is a valuable definition about religion because by saying this, Feaver specifies that "Sacred institutions, speech, beliefs, and writings are controllable observables." A reality exists in religion and must be indicated in the definition of religion. This is in contrast to those who say that religion is a connection with the mysterious or imaginary world!
3. The claim of most religions is that religion is more than a set of empirical experiences. Inner dispositions, values and fundamental approaches to life are also religious phenomena. The forerunners of religions with divine origin substantiate this claim with sound reflection. They regard secularism (exclusion of religion from the worldly life) a product of ignorance of the reality of man's physical and spiritual life and their relation to one another.
4. "Religion (or at least most religious people) asserts that it is more than a set of data among other data, and, more than a certain type of experience among other experiences," Common experiences in knowing realities, although very important and realistic, but their result is relative, temporary and dependent on sensory perceptions, mental activities, orientations, and stances during the experience. This is while religious perceptions are based upon absolute realities consisting of the basic foundations of the four types of relationship; man's relationship with himself, God, the universe, and fellow human beings. For example, the universe has a purpose; my existence has its own purpose and philosophy; there is God; human beings have duties and responsibilities; eternal life and the Resurrection are true. Since religion is based upon these realities, it is the truth and the ultimate truth.

5. Religious perception is a kind of spiritual exhilaration and not mere rational understanding of the reality or a perception of it. Thus, thinking can be a prelude to a secondary feeling.

6. "Religion entails reflection on the meaning of the world for a better human existence." Of course, Feaver should have also added the element of acting upon and searching for "a better human existence", because mere reflection does not include 'searching', which is the goal of religion.

7. "Religion entails taking into account this possibility that something at the center of reality responds to and satisfies man's needs in life and for the realization of his destiny."

The statement above must be modified in this way: "Religion entails the necessity of accepting the truth that there is something at the center of reality that responds to and satisfies the needs of man for life and realizes his destiny." At any rate, this definition has mentioned numerous dimensions of religion and has plus points compared to the previous definitions.

Jefferson's Definition

Jefferson¹ (1743-1826) believed that the pure teachings of Jesus ('a) were concealed under a wrong early account as a conspiracy of the clergy and kings to control the people.²

Assessment

Jefferson has not actually defined religion but rather mentioned the use of certain religious teachings (Christianity) by priests and kings.

The defect of Jefferson's statement lies in the fact that first of all, he mentioned what happened to Christianity's religious teachings at the hands of priests and kings, thereby keeping the essence of Christianity's teachings hidden. Secondly, it has been a peculiarity of the powerful to always use the best means for the worst objectives. Obviously, in studying a reality, its salient features must be taken into account. If we try to examine closely, every great concept like freedom, justice, beauty, governance, human rights, or cultural element that exists in history, has been misused.

¹. Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826): the third President of the United States (1801-09) and the principal author of the Declaration of Independence (1776). [Trans.]

². No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

Chapter 5 ***Utilitarian and Moralist Definitions of Religion***

Introduction

Two types of definitions of religion shall be examined:

The first is the utilitarian definition of religion. The motive behind every phenomenon can be deduced from the term (*hadd*) and proof (*burhān*). The terms ‘ambiguity’ and ‘error’ in the definition of utilitarians mean error in motive and utility. Examples of utilitarian definitions of religion are those of Karl Barth, Ritschl and Troeltsch.

The second is the moralist definition of religion. There is no dispute that morality has an important status in religious teachings. However, confusing religion with ethics is a mistake committed by some scholars of religion while defining religion. Three moralist definitions of religion by Kant, Whitehead and Paul Johnson, shall be examined.

Utilitarian Definition of Religion

Karl Barth’s Definition

Karl Barth believes that religion signifies man’s quest to reach God and it always ends up in finding God provided that, it is in accordance with man’s desire.¹

Assessment

Man’s quest to reach God is important to some extent. Religion discusses knowing God as well as journeying toward Him. However, searching for God according to man’s desire is not correct. In this regard, man’s desire cannot be the criterion. This proposition can only be acceptable if Barth refers to man’s innate desire. That is, man searches for God to which his nature attests. If we analyze Barth’s claim, we can say that by man’s desire he meant the natural human desire of all human beings. It would be contrary to reality, because great God-wary figures and personalities never conceive God according to their own desire, nor do they ask for their aspirations, from God, according to human desire. In fact, they say, “Where lies the dust (*turāb*), and the Lord of the lords (*rabb al-arbāb*)?” Like the earlier ones, this definition is not accurate because it does not deal with all dimensions of

¹. No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

religion.

Ritschl's Definition

Ritschl and Troeltsch regard religion as possessing autonomy, insight, and rational power to exert influence. According to them, Christianity will emerge as an absolute from the heart of history.¹

Assessment

There are some objections to this definition:

1. It is clear that the term ‘autonomy’ in this definition must be modified if it means empowerment, intensification and expansion of the ‘natural self’ as in the case of Thomas Hobbes’ leviathan that wants to sacrifice all animals. Not only does this goal or motive have no place in religion but, divine religion categorically and decisively wages a campaign against such ‘autonomy’.

If it means that religion wants man to attain the pinnacle of perfection, then in this case it is correct. Yet, it is clear that attainment of utmost perfection is possible by setting aside all dimensions of self-centeredness and self-interest.

2. One of the properties of religion is that it assists in possessing “rational view and power” to exert influence. Acquisition of rational view and power in a bid to exert influence is not exclusive to religion because every person wants to have an understanding and perception of the realities, and a strong willpower to exert influence. Furthermore, in religion, desiring and acquiring this power is meant only to acquire human virtue and organize the four types of man’s relationship.

3. The statement, “Christianity will emerge as an absolute from the heart of history” is a limited approach, which can be regarded as an important defect in definition.

Tillich's Definition

Paul Tillich² interprets God as the “ground of being” and religion as man’s ultimate devotion.³

He tends to interpret this total devotion as ultimate desire, saying that the

¹ No reference is given for” this passage. [Trans.]

² Paul Johannes Tillich (1886-1965): a German-American theologian and Christian existentialist philosopher. [Trans.]

³ No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

fundamental concept of religion is a state derived from an ultimate desire, an infinite rapture, which a person unconditionally takes seriously and is willing to suffer and even die for it. Ultimate desire has both an objective and subjective dimension. The subjective dimension denotes that the individual is unconditionally serious about that thing. The objective dimension is indicative of the objectivity of the ultimate desire, which Tillich called ‘God’. In other words, ‘ultimate devotion’ is ‘worship’, and in this sense, worship is an expression of admiration of something sublime, of which man is conscious.

Assessment

In this definition, some points are taken as components of the definition of religion:

1. God is the “ground of being” (the Originator and Sustainer of the universe). This component is the most basic element of the definition of divine religion.
2. “Man’s ultimate devotion”: this total devotion is man’s ultimate desire. If we interpret this point in such a way that another important component of the definition of religion is utmost devotion to God who is the foundation of existence, then the second component of the definition will become clear.
3. “It is a state derived from an ultimate desire, an infinite rapture and a thing which a person unconditionally takes seriously and for which he is willing to suffer and even die.” As the third component of the definition, this point is also totally correct. It can be said that quantitatively and qualitatively speaking, the religious martyrs are the most important of those who voluntarily offered their lives obeying the commandment of God with the ardent desire to meet Him in the eternal life. In the above passage, Tillich makes a significant statement. He says that the ultimate desire has an objective as well as subjective dimension. The subjective dimension denotes that the individual is unconditionally serious about that thing. The objective dimension is indicative of the objectivity of the ultimate desire, which he called ‘God’. This is because utmost desire is not a subjective phenomenon; rather, after the concept of God and acknowledgment of His existence and Attributes, the utmost desire penetrates from the outer layers of the mind into its innermost depth, and as an active element, it manages man’s ideal life.

Moralist Definition of Religion

Everett Dean Martin's Definition

For Everett Dean Martin,¹ religion determines the allegorical value of existence with expressions that bespeak of man's interests and inclinations to egotism.²

Assessment

This definition is also not free from ambiguity as indicated by the following:

1. In this definition, there is no mention of the category of 'value'. Are the interpretation, definition and knowledge of the 'universe,' 'self,' 'God,' and fellow 'human beings' components of the 'value' or only related to knowing?
2. It is stated, "...with expressions that bespeak of man's interests and inclinations to egotism." If it means materialistic interests and inclinations, then this point is not correct, because religion places man's goal above the realm of material things and attachment to them. But if it means perfection of personality in the sense of its blossoming and coming to fruition in preparation for the eternal life, then this point is correct. However, instead of the word 'egotism' a more appropriate word must be chosen.
3. The absence of a complete definition of religion is also present in this definition.

Kant's Definition

Kant³ classifies religion into two, viz. natural religion and supernatural religion. Accordingly, natural religion refers to the religion whose principles are consistent with the practical rational (moral) principles, while supernatural religion is based upon theology (revelation). Perhaps it means that Kant regarded the totality of ethics and theology (revelation) as religion. In his discussion of natural religion in ethics, he himself said that natural religion is not a rule. It is a moral religion inspired by God... The

¹. Everett Dean Martin (1880-1941): U.S. writer and lecturer on social philosophy and psychology. [Trans.]

². No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

³. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804): the German philosopher regarded by many as the most influential thinker of modern times. [Trans.]

combination of ethics and theology constitutes religion.¹

Assessment

This is a good interpretation of Kant's view on religion. The correctness or incorrectness of this interpretation can be inferred from his famous expressions about duty. He said,

O duty! O great and high name! You are not pleasing and charming, but you ask people to obey, and manage to shake the will of some, bringing the self to what we abhor. You do not frighten it, but you only enact a law, which penetrates into the self, and even if we do not obey it, willy-nilly, we respect it. All inclinations, although in the end one acts against it, submit to it. O duty! What is the basis of your origin? Where can your noble racial root be found. where, it totally avoids inclinations, and the condition of compulsion among people emanates from the same basis or root. Man goes beyond himself through that basis, which connects him to something which only reason can perceive. That basis is indeed man's personality; that is, his autonomy and independence vis-à-vis the instrument of nature.²

In reality, Kant interpreted religion through moral concepts whose limit is not confined to reason. Kant wanted to arrive at religion based on ethics. That is, through the sense of duty, he wanted to have access to the Origin of duty. He situated ethics within the spectrum of practical reason. In reality, he embarked on proving religion on the basis of morality. This way of thinking to prove religion, takes into account a factor which in itself requires a more accurate explanation. In other words, this deep conscience of man presents man and the world as meaningful. This same conscience affirms the merit of ethics for a 'rational life'. Other elements of religion need consideration, like the following:

1. The final answer to the six questions, mentioned earlier, cannot be given by any way of thinking except religion.



"Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return."³

2. The factor affirming lofty values without which human life will be

¹ No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

² Muhammad 'Ali Furūghī, *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 2, p. 169.

³ *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:156.

unjustifiable. Moreover, abiding by them for perfection, and providing essential services to fellow human beings by setting aside pleasures, and even acts of sacrifice, will be considered a sort of foolishness.

1. The sense of astonishment at the amazing order in the universe. is nothing but imagination without acknowledgment of God who has brought it into being. These proofs show the need to profess religion in this life, but which religion is what must be investigated.

Whitehead's Definition

Whitehead¹ maintained that religion is an instrument of universal truths which if sincerely accepted and correctly understood, manifests the effect of change in one's personality and morality.²

Assessment

This definition highlights the effect and outcome of religion. That is, if religion is sincerely professed and understood by a person, his personality will be transformed. In other words, religion is an instrument of universal truths, which has positive effects on man's personality.

Whitehead has a positive and extremely admirable view about religion. In some of his writings, he has raised important points in a bid to affirm religion and refute the notions of the ignorant about religion. Therefore, the above definition of religion by him is definitely valid in that particular aspect.

Whitehead's definition of religion was particularly necessary to rescue narrow-minded and credulous individuals from sophistries and fallacies of the actors in the theater of self-interest.

Paul Johnson's Definition

Paul Johnson observed three basic effects of religion: (1) innate hope for some values; (2) self-conscious attachment to the forces that maintain these values; and (3) ingraining these values through the help of those forces.

One of the basic principles of religion is the belief that the existence of man is not accidental; rather, a certain Force has determined it and can instill desire or will in him. Such definitions encompass some important elements

¹ Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947): an English mathematician who became a philosopher. [Trans.]

² Muhammad Iqbāl Lāhūrī, *Iḥyā-ye Fikr-e Dīnī dar Islām*, p. 5.

of religion:

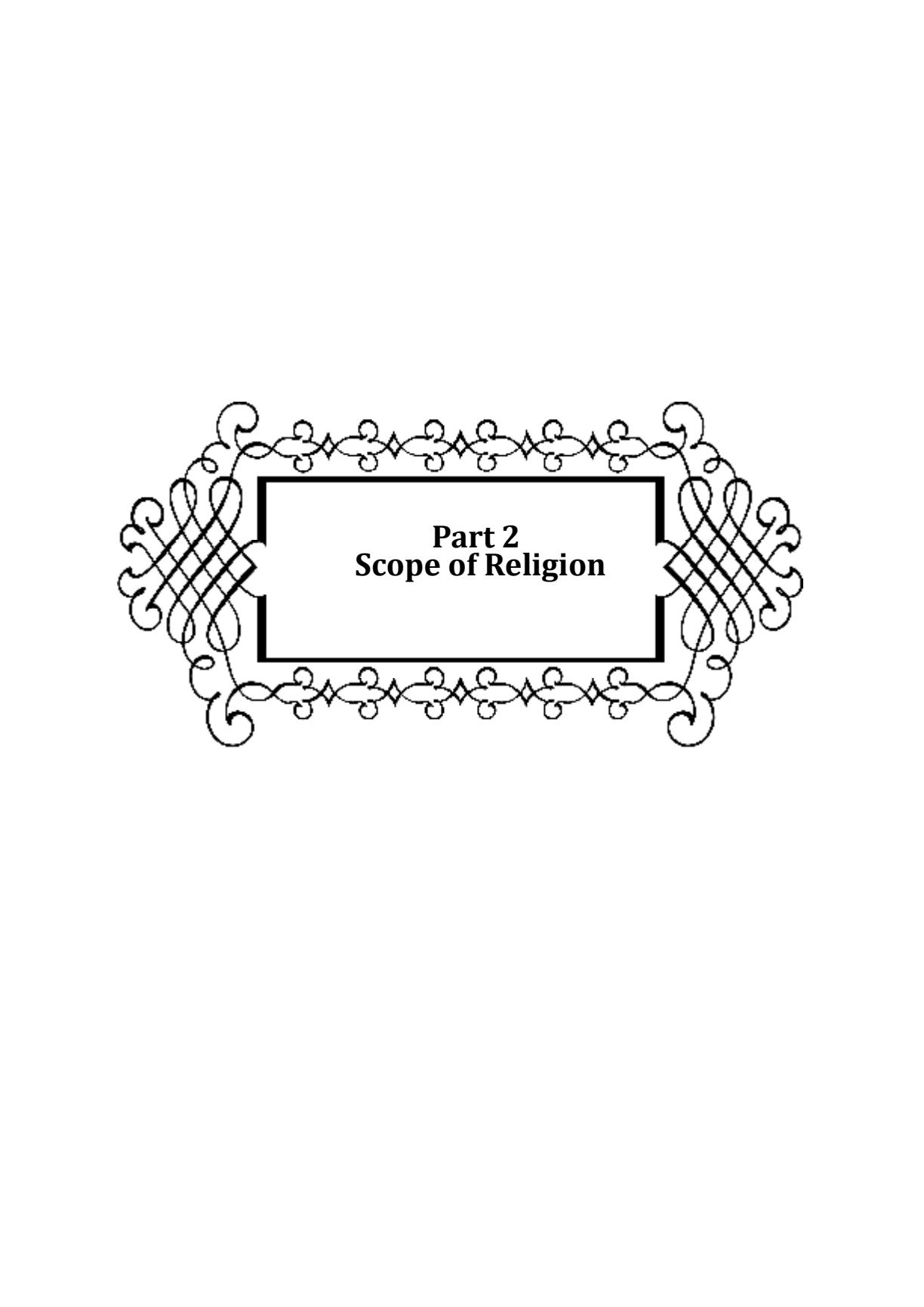
1. Emotional factor: belief in a Force or forces that control man's fate, and the respect accorded to material and spiritual values needed by people, are a product of this conviction.
2. Factor related to feelings: feeling of attachment to this Force or forces in various ways.
3. Element of acceptance: religion deals with actions and acceptance; for example, performing ritual prayers and acknowledging moral laws.
4. Social factor: religion deals with social problems through whose domain the people collectively act to acquire the values offered by religion.

Assessment

Some features mentioned in the above expressions about religion are true. However, 'forces that control man's fate' must be clarified. If it means the Divine Will over the universe, then it is correct. The Divine will does not contradict man's freewill but grants it. The above definition expresses it in such a way that the dominance of the forces negates man's freewill, and this is not correct, because then responsibilities, regrets, lofty moral values, and freewill become meaningless.

The phrase "feeling of attachment to this Force or forces through various ways" is supposed to be interpreted in such a way that in religion man feels a sense of attachment to the Absolute Perfection. That is, man has a sense of yearning and inclination toward God.

This definition then discusses the existence of a set of laws and responsibilities, which is acceptable. As the fourth point, the social dimension of religion is given attention; that is, the existence of duties and values that establish a social order. Sociologists define religion in such a way that it encompasses polytheistic beliefs as well as Hindu and Shinto rituals. They have combined the common features of different beliefs and presented it as the definition of religion!



Part 2
Scope of Religion

Chapter 1 ***Reason behind the Need for Religion***

Before determining the realm of religion, it is necessary to discuss the need for religion and logically clarify this need for human beings. In order to understand why a person turns to religion we must know the meaning of religion as well as that of life. In general, life can be classified into two main types: common natural life and rational life.

Common natural life is the phenomena of natural life; for example, feeling, moving, choosing, thinking, reproducing, attracting sources of pleasure, and avoiding sources of harm, as far as possible. It is the pure natural life which encompasses all animals—from the unicellular organism to the human being with 75 trillion cells.

Life, in the first sense, is not only not in need of religion, but in some instances, also disturbed by it. This kind of life can benefit from all things in whatever way it wants for its desires. In this life, knowledge, art, nobility, dignity, morality, religion, rights, politics, culture, civilization, and freedom, are all viewed from a Machiavellian perspective, as a means to an end.

Meanwhile, rational life is the opposite of common natural life. Rational life pertains to a conscious search that increases the ardent desire to move to the next stage. The human being is the forerunner of this search, whose origin is eternity. This meaningful world is his passageway. His ultimate aim is to be in the eternal realm, in the Axis of Absolute Perfection; the Absolute Perfection whose zephyr of love and glory makes waves on the things in the universe and whose light brightens the tortuous path of material and spiritual perfection.

Now, we shall define religion. Religion is based on two basic pillars:

1) A belief in the existence of the One and Only God, the Absolute Overseer and Sovereign in the universe, above any passion and inclination, the embodiment of all Attributes of Perfection. He has created the universe in accordance with His sublime wisdom; through the two great guides; reason, the inward guide, and the prophets and their successors as the outward guides, He has set man in motion for perfection until the attainment of the Beatific Vision (*liqā' Allāh*). Another belief is in the eternal life without which life and the entire universe would be an unsolvable puzzle. These

beliefs are held by a sound intellect and intrinsic perception, free from blind imitation.

2) A program of action termed ‘laws’ and ‘duties’. These two pillars are based upon two things:

1. ***Moral code***: Laws which are ordained for the attainment of virtues, refinement of the soul and inner purification. Due to the innate and universal nature of virtues and values, most of these laws are intrinsic and not extrinsic.

2. ***Juristic laws***, which can be classified into two:

A) Primary laws: Primary laws are based upon the fixed needs of human beings, and can never be changed or modified except in emergency cases and change of subject. For example, the compulsoriness of specific acts of worship, and organizing individual and social life economically, culturally and legally; the prohibition of killing, adultery and fornication, debauchery, breach of contract, and treachery. In reality, these laws are indicative of the fixed nature of man and the nature of the four types of relationship: with himself, with God, with the universe, and with fellow human beings.

B) Secondary laws: These laws shall be prescribed, as needs of individual or social life arise, and are based upon secondary causes and motives. In such cases, the ruler (*hākim*) prescribes laws to address those needs. If those needs are removed, those laws shall also be abrogated. Since the issuance of the secondary laws is also based upon legal needs, these laws shall be also be considered conditional and the changes in them related to a certain case.

In order to complete the program of action for the attainment of the goal, it is necessary to pay attention to this point: since God the Exalted, determines the subjects, dos and don’ts in relation to individual and social life. Thus, Islamic laws are prescribed on the basis of the same specified laws; for example, the importance of farming for the community, makes it obligatory. However, in some cases, the identity of the subjects is specified by the primary Islamic sources; for example, the ritual prayer (*ṣalāt*) whose actions and recitations are determined by the Islamic sources; wet nursing (*irdā‘*) which renders unlawful the marriage to a wet sister or a wet brother; the amount of *kurr*¹ water, and the like.¹

¹ In Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), *kurr* water is a type of pure (*mutlaq*). Equivalent to

Now, in view of the definition we have given to life and religion, we can briefly enumerate the causes of the need for religion in human life, as follows:

1. The definition we have given to ‘rational life’ cannot be realized without professing religion.
2. It is impossible to give an ultimate answer to the most basic questions in life: (1) Who am I? (2) Where have I come from? (3) Where have I come? (4) Who am I with? (5) Where shall I go? (6) What have I come for? Religion can, which states, “*Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return,*”²
3. If man does not need religion, no virtue and value can be affirmed.
4. No one and no school of thought is capable of answering the might-is-right and survival-of-the-fittest school, which holds that life is only meant for the powerful, without relying on religion.
5. Disregarding religion in life brings about the extinction of man’s feelings of awe on the magnificence of the universe—a feeling which, if not based upon a Wisdom and Will above this world, is meaningless.
6. It is impossible to give an ultimate and profound interpretation of the perceptible and rational beauties without religion.
7. Religion intensifies a pure, sublime sense of duty and maintains it. This sublime duty is different from the rules needed for man’s natural life and establishment of order. Without this pure feeling, man will be reduced into a robot, devoid of any intelligence.

Second point: Every person is supposed clarify the reason behind the need for religion in keeping with his knowledge of himself and the things around him. Since religion is for everybody and not exclusive only for the researchers or a specific class, it follows that it is also for everybody to examine the reason behind the need for religion.

384 liters, it the amount of water which if it is poured into a container whose length, breadth and depth are three and half medium spans, fills that container. [Trans.]

¹ For further information on the permanent and the variables, see Muḥammad Taqī Ja‘farī, *Tarjumeh wa Tafsīr-e Nahj al-Balāghah*, pp. 243-309.

² *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:156.

However, questioning a person who has no knowledge of religion at all about the reason behind the need for religion is a question about something unknown. By merely having a little knowledge about himself and the universe, it is possible for a person to entertain this question: “With my ideas, beliefs and usual skills I must have for the natural life, should I have other ideas, beliefs and activities in the name of religion?” This is the first degree of knowledge that prompts a person to ask about the reason behind the need for religion. As one’s knowledge about himself, God, the universe, and society increases, the question about religion and the need for it gets more serious. However, when skepticism or a sort of selfishness intoxicates him he loses interest in concluding his knowledge.

Third point: The most fundamental questions in life are raised by the natural disposition (*fitrah*) and sound intellect, and not by a particular hypothetical intellect. If we consider these two important faculties as factors for religion—without considering the fact religion has emphasized the two and their components—the question about the reason behind the need for religion is outside religion. It has not emanated from religion or religious texts. As such, the answer to be given to it by reason must also be taken outside religion, otherwise it would be [a fallacy of] begging the question (*petitio principi*).¹

However, if we consider the natural disposition, sound intellect and their components as things religion has emphasized and called upon, it follows that the question on the reason behind the need for religion as well as the affirmative answer to it will be regarded as things within religion. We believe that considering the need to pay attention to and act upon the demand of ones natural disposition and sound intellect, we prove the need for professing religion, and the reason behind the need for religion is one of the basic foundations of religion and the proof, taken from the two faculties, is intrinsic (*dhāti*). In this regard, two points are worth mentioning:

1. In our view, not only should those individuals, who have not yet chosen their religion, question the reason behind the need for religion. In fact, the faithful and the religious can also ask the same, and to do so is not

¹ It is because if the answer to the question “Is man in need of religion?” is to be taken from religion itself, it follows that an answer is already prepared from that which is asked, i.e. religion. This is while religion (and the need for it) is yet to be proven, let alone providing an answer to the question.

contradictory to devotion and religiosity, but is also regarded as one of the foundations of religion, because it is based upon axiomatic and independent laws of the natural disposition and intellect.

2. This question is a perpetual one because human education is incapable of achieving human perfection at once.

We also consider incessant questioning about important cases of the rational life as extremely useful, nay essential. This is because a profound understanding is something essential for a discernible, justifiable and purposeful life. Relying on predecessors' beliefs and established proofs, has no capability of discerning and justifying a purposeful life. For this reason, all Shī‘ah philosophers, theologians, jurists, and exegetes maintain that belief in the principles of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*) must be based upon reasoning and not imitation except for those who are incapable of reasoning and thinking.

Fourth point: in order to elucidate the reason behind the need for religion, one can use the empirical, deductive and intuitive methods (scientific, philosophical and mystical methods), but the realities in which movement is possible and can be followed through experiment, evidence, reasoning, unraveling, and intuition need attention. Here we shall point out some of these realities as examples:

1. It is important to purge one's mind of influences that hinder the activity of the natural disposition, conscience and sound intellect. It is through this purging that man will become ready to perceive the truth, whether this truth is related to religion or not.

2. Since inclination to religion is ingrained in man's being, by considering his quest for perfection and the ultimate goal of life, one must strive to prove the above point through rational proofs and pure perceptions of the conscience.

3. We can prove the existing order and harmony in the realms of man and the world though scientific laws.

4. We can prove the interdependence of the components of creation: such interdependence affirms their relationship to an independent and self-governing Truth. This matter is a rational rule:

هرچه عارض باشد آن را جوهری باید نخست

عقل بر این دعوی ما شاهد گویاستی

5. A sublime sense of the conscience; that is, this feeling:

روزگار و چرخ و انجم سر بسر بازیستی

گرنه این روز دراز دهر را فرداستی

The world, fate and stars are all your playthings

Otherwise, this long day of fortune is your tomorrow.¹

If there is really no Origin (*mabda'*) and Resurrection (*ma 'ād*), then not only are fate, stars, virtues, and values nothing but playthings of the natural-animalistic life, but this would also be a place of struggle for survival, and mastery of the powerful, in which one would not officially recognize anyone except himself. If there is really no Origin and Resurrection, all the sacrifices of the noble and pure-hearted for the sake of rendering service to human beings, whose existence has been willed by God, would become futile and useless. If there is really no Origin and Resurrection, to die for the sake of defending human rights and to refrain from sensual pleasures would be sheer folly.

There has been no wholesome and deep-rooted factor throughout history like religion, which provides peace of mind to people.

It is not distorted, or infused with absolute concepts, which are practically unfeasible in the context of natural life.

Sublime witnessing is a kind of lofty effulgence in the world, which cannot be attained except through the extension of the human "I" to the universe. This is the same intuition, which is possessed not only by mystics ('*urafa*) but also by great scholars.

Fifth point: Is man an afflicted and indigent being, and can only religion remove this affliction and indigence? Is there another formula that can play the role of religion? Discussing the cause and need for religion, we have pointed out the answer to this question. We shall now examine it more specifically.

In reply to the first part of the question, it must be stated that man is not afflicted but has lost something he must find. Definitely, this truth, whatever

¹. Nāṣir Khusrū, *Dīwān-e Ash 'ar*, Elegy 241.

is its name, must have the answer to his basic questions, and failure to offer the answers will end up in no less than a nihilist impasse, which many people today suffer from.

An affirmative reply to these questions is vital. Modern man, in view of his disregard for these questions, is not willing to accept any principles. As such, he lives in ‘today’ and has neither ‘yesterday’ nor ‘tomorrow’. That is, if a person lives in comfort, ease and pleasure today, he has everything including the past and the future. For this reason, it can be asserted that contemporary man is present-oriented. The source of all principles and laws that determine man’s duty in relation to the four types of relationship is lost, i.e. religion. That which is lost is not something imaginary. It confirms all realities and without it, nothing can be considered good or bad.

Yet, the factor which prompts a person to find himself first and then his lost item is to pay attention to the fact that man is a meaningful part of a meaningful world, and in order to bring to fruition his potential, he must practically observe certain principles. From the religious perspective, people can perceive themselves as well as the philosophy behind man’s creation from the Origin of creation. It is by means of understanding this reality that a person can find himself first and then his lost item (religion).

Meanwhile, in examining the second part of the question, it must be noted that first of all, some people have turned away from religion and replaced it with concepts like universal ethics, universal rights, global culture, and the interesting term ‘humanism’. And, theoretically and practically, these terms have not been able to show what has essentially been lost.

Secondly, granted that man can bring down the abovementioned concepts from the domain of academia and practically make use of them, their supposed claims can only ensure a wholesome life in the realm of social relations. However, the real lost item will remain unknown To hide the true nature of the lost item from the minds of people, the prominent deviants have discovered an addictive ampule. By injecting it into the hearts and minds of people, they maximize their benefit. This addictive ampule is nothing but to amass wealth in whatever way possible.

Sixth point: It becomes clear that the need for religion is a real need whose essence does not change with the change of man’s perception about himself, the world and religion. The essence of the need for religion—as a reality outside the human constitution—is something fixed and it does not change

with the changes in man's perceptions about himself and the world he lives in. Yes, religion has something to do with man and his life. That reality is inalterable whether it emanates from superficial elements or genuine factors because man's essence and its basic elements are inalterable.

Religion has something to do with man and his life just as intellection, feelings, self-love or self-preservation has something to do with man. As such, even if man's perceptions of the four types of relationship change, the essence of intellection, feelings and self-preservation will never change.

If it is assumed that a time will come when man will lose his essential reality as well as his feelings, willpower, intellect, and desire for self-preservation, there will be no human beings then, let alone their essential features, like inclination to religion and its need.

Chapter 2

Scope of Jurisprudence

If jurisprudence (*fiqh*) refers to the laws prescribed by God, the Exalted, in the individual and social dimension of human life in the shape of do's and don'ts, then it does not encompass religion as a whole. The scope of religion is much larger than that of jurisprudence.

Since jurisprudence is a part of religion, the perfectness of religion must be distinguished from the perfectness of jurisprudence. The perfectness of religion means that religion has the answer to all matters related to the four types of relationship in the realm of "as it is" and "as it must". It is clear that these matters include beliefs, laws, duties, all types of divine and human rights, and perception of one's standing in the world. The perfectness of jurisprudence means declaration of all laws related to individual and collective duties and rights in the realm of do's and don'ts. Yes, man's life in the world is meant to bring to fruition his personality while moving toward eternal life. Without laws, this very important course will be impossible. That is why God, the Exalted, has conveyed these laws to His servants. The perfectness of jurisprudence is that the jurisprudential laws encompass all aspects of activities and self-restrictions that are significant in bringing man's personality to fruition.

The perfectness of religion lies in giving answers to the questions of a person in dealing with the four types of relationship, and the perfection of man lies in activating all his potential in the individual and social spheres to bring to fruition his personality while moving toward eternal life. The four types of relationship can also be divided into two basic types: relationship of "what is" and, relationship of "what must or may be". These relationships must be organized according to all natural, rational, and moral sciences that guide along the path of human perfection.

Man's Relationship with Himself

The two basic pillars of the perfectness of religion in the above relationship are: the need for knowing the self and, the need for self-building.

First Pillar: The Need for Knowing the Self

The basic proofs of religion—consisting of Qur'ānic verses, traditions (*ahādīth*), rational proofs, and consensus (*ijmā'*)—regarding the need for

knowing the self are so many that there is no need for further elaboration. We shall mention some of the above here:

1. Examples of Qur'ānic Verses Proving the Need for Knowing the Self:

﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَقَافِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ﴾

“Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls.”¹

﴿وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ * وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا يُبَصِّرُونَ﴾

“In the earth are signs for those who have conviction, and in your own souls [as well]. Will you not then perceive?”²

﴿وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنفُسَهُمْ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾

“And do not be like those who forget Allah, so He makes them forget their own souls.”³

﴿أَوْلَا يَذَكُّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا﴾

“Does not man remember that We created him before when he was nothing?”⁴

Obviously, man can realize his past state of nothingness if he has advanced and attained perfection. Therefore, the requisite of understanding the past and its nature is to understand the present state.

﴿بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ * وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَةً﴾

“Rather man is a witness to himself, though he should offer his excuses.”⁵

Reflecting on this great feature can either be through the natural disposition (*fitrah*) and common intellection, or through in-depth study and research. In both cases, knowing the self indicates growth [in a person].

﴿لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ﴾

“We certainly created man in the best of forms.”⁶

¹. *Sūrat Fuṣṣilat* 41:53.

². *Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt* 51:20.

³. *Sūrat al-Hashr* 59:19.

⁴. *Sūrat Maryam* 19:67.

⁵. *Sūrat al-Qiyāmah* 75:14-15.

⁶. *Sūrat al-Tīn* 95:4.

﴿وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبْثُ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقَنُونَ﴾

“And in your creation [too], and whatever animals that He scatters abroad, there are signs for a people who have certainty.”¹

There are many Qur’ānic verses stating the superb order of the physical constitution and the greatness of the soul of man with enormous potential. There is no doubt that it is not only a reality but also encourages and urges man to know himself. A person who does not know himself is not different from animals. In fact, in terms of guidance, his condition is worse than animals. In this regard, God, the Blessed and Exalted, says:

﴿أَوْلَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ﴾

“They are like cattle; rather they are more astray.”²

2. Examples of Traditions Proving the Need for Knowing the Self

منْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ فَقَدْ عَرَفَ رَبَّهُ.

He who knows himself knows his Lord.³

The content of this *hadīth* has been narrated widely. We all know that no knowledge is greater and more essential than the knowledge of God. Therefore, knowledge of the self is an essential prerequisite, therefore, indispensable .

الْعَارِفُ مَنْ عَرَفَ قَدْرَهُ.

“The gnostic is he who knows his worth.”⁴

وَكَفَىٰ بِالْمَرءِ جَهَلًا أَنْ لَا يَعْرِفُ قَدْرَهُ.

“For the ignorance of a person, it is enough [indication] that he does not know his worth.”⁵

مَنْ جَهَلَ قَدْرَهُ عَدَا طُورَهُ.

“He who is ignorant of his worth transgresses his due limit.”⁶

¹. *Sūrat al-Jāthiyah* 45:4.

². *Sūrat al-A ‘rāf* 7:179.

³. āmadi, *Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalam*, vol. 5, p. 194.

⁴. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 103.

⁵. *Ibid.*

⁶. *Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalam*, vol. 5, p. 197.

مَنْ عَرَفَ نَفْسَهُ جَلَّ أُمْرَهُ.

“He who knows himself attains his pinnacle.”¹

The following traditions (*ahādīth*) prove the necessity of self-building in the realm of “what ought to be”.

مَنْ سَاسَ نَفْسَهُ أَدْرَكَ الْسِّيَاسَةَ.

“He who manages himself knows management [and executes it, be it for himself or for others].”²

It is so, unless a person with all his potential and dimensions is not the same with all other human beings.

فَحَاسِبُ نَفْسَكَ لِنَفْسَكَ.

“Take account of yourself for the sake of your [own] self[’s attainment of perfection].”³

إِنْ مِنْ أَحَبَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِلَيْهِ عَبْدًا أَعَانَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسَهُ.

“The best of Allah’s servants in His sight is he, who helps Allah in regards to himself (his self-building).”⁴

فَمَنْ شَغَلَ نَفْسَهُ بِغَيْرِهَا تَحْبَرُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ.

“Whoever keeps himself with other than it, shall remain overwhelmed in darkness.”⁵

وَلَيْسَ أَلْتَجُرُ أَنْ تَرِي الْأَدْنِيَا لِنَفْسَكَ ثُمَّاً.

“The worst of dealings is, for you to evaluate the world with yourself.”

That is, to take the world in exchange with yourself in a barter trade.

فَأَخْذَا امْرَءٌ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ لِنَفْسِهِ.

That is, in this world, every person must utilize his potential for the sake of self-building.

¹. *Ibid.*, p. 208.

². *Ibid.*

³. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 222.

⁴. *Ibid.*, Sermon 87.

⁵. *Ibid.*, Sermon 157.

Second Pillar: The Need for Self-building

Examples of Qur'ānic Verses on the Need for Self-building

﴿إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاءُكُمْ﴾

“Indeed the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most God-wary among you.”¹

There are many Qur'ānic verses enjoining God-wariness (*taqwā*). *Taqwā* means complete protection of the self from pollution and impurity as well as self-refinement, to deserve eternal bliss.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنفُسُكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ﴾

“O, you who have faith! Take care of your own souls. He who strays cannot hurt you if you are guided.”²

The importance of self-building is such that if all people are misguided, every person must reform himself.

﴿إِنْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ أَحْسَنْتُمْ لِأَنفُسِكُمْ وَإِنْ أَسَأْتُمْ فَلَهَا﴾

“If you do good, you will do good to your [own] souls, and if you do evil, it will be [evil] for them.”³

﴿وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهُوَى * فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَى﴾

“But as for him who is awed to stand before his Lord and forbids the soul from [following] desire, his refuge will indeed be paradise.”⁴

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوَا أَنفُسُكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا﴾

“O, you who have faith! Save yourselves and your families from the Fire.”⁵

The verses in the Noble Qur'ān enjoin self-building in various ways. For example:

1. Verses which state that every person shall see his soul on the Day of Judgment the way he moulds it:

¹. *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* 49:13.

². *Sūrat al-Mā' idah* 5:105.

³. *Sūrat al-Isrā'* (or *Banī Isrā' il*) 17:7.

⁴. *Sūrat an-Nāzi'at* 79:40-41.

⁵. *Sūrat al-Tahrīm* 66:6.

﴿رَوْفَقَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ﴾

“And every soul shall be recompensed fully for what it has earned.”¹

2. Verses which indicate that real loss belongs to those who let themselves incur a loss:

﴿فُلْ هُلْ نَتَّيْكُمْ بِالْخَاسِرِينَ أَعْمَالًا * الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا﴾

“Say, ‘Shall we inform you about the biggest losers in regard to actions? Those, whose endeavors go awry in the life of the world, while they suppose they are doing good’.”²

﴿إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسَرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ﴾

“Indeed the losers are those who have ruined themselves and their families on the Day of Resurrection.”³

According to Islam, every type of knowledge or learning which can be acquired in a course of time must be utilized in both realms—the realm of knowing the self as it is and as it ought to be. This is because Islam is based upon the fixed needs in both alterable and inalterable realms.

The perfectness of Islam and Islamic jurisprudence means that Islam deals with the principles of beliefs and laws, about man’s relationship with himself that can be the answer to all his permanent and changing needs.

We shall quote some examples of these beliefs and laws here:

1. Beliefs in the Realm of Knowing the Self as It is
2. Man possesses a body and soul.
3. In accordance with God’s Wisdom, man has been created for a lofty goal, which he must strive hard to attain.
4. The goal of man’s life is to bring his personality to fruition in the passageway of eternity, which is the Axis of Lordly Perfection.
5. The basic factors that help man’s advancement toward perfection along the path of lofty goal are his sublime feelings, intellection and pure

¹. *Sūrat al-‘Imrān* 3:25.

². *Sūrat al-Kahf* 18:103-105.

³. *Sūrat al-Shūrā* 42:45.

conscience (*fitrah*).

6. If by making use of the above factors, man does not attain any spiritual growth, the ground for his moving along the path of fierce nature is paved.
7. Man has lofty positive faculties and potential as well as lowly negative traits.
8. Man has an essential honor, which can pave the ground for ideal honor through God-wariness (*taqwā*).
9. Man's basic potential after perceiving the main origin and goal of life is the potential for social life.
10. Man enters into a contract for social life.
11. Man has the infinite potential for perfection in the physical domain as well as in the stages of spiritual growth, through teaching, learning, intuition, mystical unraveling (*iktishāfāt*), and practical inquiry.
12. Man's most important positive potential is responsible freedom. The scope of his responsibilities is stated in jurisprudence and ethics. The sources of these beliefs are the Qur'ān, *Sunnah*, reason ('*aql*), and the consensus (consensus) of all learned men in every period and society, whose members possess a high level of culture.

Laws in the Realm of Knowing the Self as It Must be

1. Man must know himself as much as he can, and he must strive hard to reform and enhance his personality. "Self-alienation" is forbidden.¹
2. It is necessary to provide amenities for an honorable life. Negligence in providing the amenities for an honorable life is forbidden.
3. It is necessary to change an environment that fosters moral and religious corruption. It is unlawful to lead a life in such an environment.
4. It is essential to respect human honor. It is unlawful to tolerate meanness, contempt and anything that undermines nobility.

¹. The indispensable proofs of the prohibition of abandoning it have been debated by some authorities, but in view of the definite evil of abandoning fundamental obligatory acts, the prohibition of abandoning them is indisputable whether this is based upon verbal or rational proofs. Nevertheless, we deem it necessary to prove this prohibition categorically for the sake of emphasis.

5. It is necessary to learn as much as possible whatever is essential for rational life. It is unlawful to refrain from learning it.
6. It is necessary to be concerned as much as possible with what is good and evil for society. It is unlawful to be indifferent and apathetic to the welfare or corruption of society.
7. It is necessary to strive hard for the enhancement of constructive abilities and discovery of what is essential for individual and social life.
8. It is necessary to stage a serious campaign against anything that can corrupt the soul. It is forbidden to excuse the self from facing the agents of corruption and be indifferent to them.
9. It is necessary to strive to attain responsible freedom. It is unlawful to prevent the self from facing the factors that could possibly achieve responsible freedom in the realm of values.
10. It is necessary to establish free connection with the amenities of the world so that they become man's possession. Man's possession of any amenity of the world is prohibited which leads to his expected downfall.

Since these beliefs and laws are in the realm of rational, intrinsic and moral self-building, one can understand their basis without need for technical and knotty reasoning. By obtaining the basis and cause of each of them, the necessary laws (obligatory) and meritorious laws (recommendatory) can also be understood. For example, it is essential to know, reform, and advance, to rescue the self from ignorance and self-alienation. In order to attain the stated goal, it is obligatory to undertake a bit of mental or rational activities. In the parlance of jurisprudence, these are called *mustahabbāt* (recommendatory acts). In the above example, it is obligatory for person to increase his knowledge about himself to the extent necessary and to deal with terms above that necessary.

Man's Relationship with God

The perfectness of religion in the above relationship has two pillars: beliefs in the realm of man's relationship with God and, laws in the realm of man's relationship with God.

1. Beliefs in the Realm of Man's Relationship with God

Beliefs in the realm of man's relationship with God are as follows:

1. God, the Exalted, is the One and Only Being. He has no partner and equal. He is the All-knowing, the Allmighty, the Most Just, and the Most Wise.
2. God, the Exalted, is the Creator of the entire universe who created it with His absolute will and perfect wisdom.
3. God, the Exalted, is above everything. He encompasses everything and is needless of all things.
4. God, the Exalted, possesses all the Perfect Attributes of Beauty and Glory. Although the concepts of His Attributes are generally understandable to human beings, their ultimate essence or nature is beyond human comprehension.
5. God, the Exalted, is beyond the universe, time, and any determinate or indeterminate space. He is eternal, everlasting and infinite.
6. Of all the creatures in the universe, He bestows special grace and favor to man so that he can enter the Axis of Divine Perfection by acquiring knowledge and making sincere practical efforts.
7. God, the Exalted, reflects rays of His Lights into the hearts of those who succeed in observing the rules of Allah (*ādāb Allāh*) and emulating the manners of Allah (*akhlāq Allāh*).
8. Man is a being created according to the sublime wisdom and perfect will of God.
9. The perpetuity of human existence, as in the case of all other creatures, lies on the perpetuity of God's favor.
10. The power, means and laws which govern volitional acts of man—what he says, does and thinks as well as any other activity within him—come from God while the intention, decision and choice lies with man. For this reason, man is responsible for his volitional act.
11. Man has the potential to achieve nearness (*qurb*) to God. This is the noblest of power existing in man in relation to God and activated by knowledge and God-wariness.
12. The quantity and quality of man's proximity to God are beyond measure and description because there is no specific end for this state.
13. The love and mercy of God towards His servants is vaster than anything else, and His wrath or anger has something to do with the offense committed

by the sinful person, and not as revenge in its common sense, which emanates from the defective and unpleasant feeling of the avenger.

14. Self-oblivion and self-alienation of man leads to being forsaken by God, which in turn leads to his self-centeredness and self-interest.

Laws in the Realm of Man's Relationship with God

Since man can sense the truth in this life that all his actions (speeches, deeds, thoughts, intentions, and avoidances) are under the supervision of God, then as the noble verse states,

﴿فُلِّ إِنْ صَلَاتِي وَسُكُونِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“Say, ‘Indeed my prayer and my worship, my life and my death are all for the sake of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds’.”¹

One can choose his actions in such a way that they can be referred to God.

Referring those actions to God whose being obligatory (*wājib*), recommendatory (*mustahabb*), unlawful (*harām*), and abominable (*makrūh*) have been clarified by legislation and reason is perfectly clear and it needs no special proof. Regarding the permissible acts (*mubāhāt*), however, a certain *mubāh* action can be referred to God with the intention that with it one wants to break the monotony of life and be reinvigorated for actions that can be directly referred to God. In a nutshell, with the knowledge of the fact that the universe is [in] the presence of God and with the intention of being worthy to be in His presence, all actions and avoidances can be referred to God. The perfectness of religion and its jurisprudence depends on the fact that it states rationally and convincingly the wisdom, nature and proofs of these laws.

Man's Relationship with the Universe

This relationship has two forms: man's relationship with the universe as it is and as it should be:

Man's Relationship with the Universe as It is

Although man is apparently part of the universe, in view of his great potential, he can be a ‘universe’ vis-à-vis the universe. In fact, due to constructive search along the path of perfection, this being can reach a loftier station and his “I” can encompass the entire universe. Nevertheless, the nature of this vast universe is like a very vast farm. Through the favor of the

¹. *Sūrat al-An ‘ām* 6:162.

Gardener of the entire universe, the seeds of human talents and potential germinate. This potential is immense [volume 1 of *Tarjumeh wa Sharh-e Nahj al-Balāghah*] Moreover, the power of personification, ingenuity and its varieties are still unknown to man. This is an evaluation of the human being “as he is”.

Meanwhile, let us proceed to the universe “as it is”. It is true that in the course of history, man has tried to know himself and the universe and has also achieved remarkable success. By knowing the general principles which describe that fundamental system of man and the universe and state man’s duties in it, he has been able to direct himself along the path of a purposeful life and this can guarantee his felicity in the eternal life.

We shall now deal with the general principles of the universe as it is. Some of these principles are:

1. The universe is real and it is not a product of the human mind.
2. The coming into existence of the universe is true in the sense that it is created by the Will and Wisdom of God, and not by accident which goes against the law.¹
3. The universe can be known in two ways:
 - The human mind establishes a connection with the universe like a mirror, only showing physical appearances. This is a superficial connection, which does not refer to anything beyond the tangible, that can be experimented and with limited objectives.
 - In addition to sensible observations and objective empirical experiments, the human mind can perceive the Divine signs as expressed in the astounding order and splendor of the universe. The Noble Qur’ān has strongly emphasized acquisition of such vital knowledge about oneself and the universe. From the intellectual perspective, it must be stated that besides the universe’s direct connection with God, which exhibits the existence of law, order, motion and other components dependent upon Him, man and the universe are beyond interpretation and convincing justification. It is in view of this aspect of the universe that we say that for the

¹. That the universe is true means that in addition to being real, the universe is worthy of coming into existence and subsisting.

conscious person, this world is a vast place of worship.

4. Like our knowledge about man, our knowledge about the universe is a product of two basic elements:

- The reality of man and the universe apart from their being factors for perception.
- The connection of the factors for perception with their special features, as in the case of the eye with specific compositions establishes connection with shapes and colors, and embeds its special product to knowledge. Similarly, laboratories and any means of extending or increasing our knowledge, with all the special features they have, clarify our knowledge.¹

5. Without referring to God, the universe is beyond understanding and interpretation, a plaything in which no moral virtue or value has any meaning.

Since the order of the universe is beyond our control and with utmost order and splendor, one cannot destroy the universe, create another universe as replacement and then say that we must create the entire universe in the way it is supposed to be.² This is because the world “as it is” is the same world in which we are situated as part of it.

Since our physical life and spiritual life is not possible without change, the components of the universe could not have come into existence without activity and effecting of change in the course of history. In fact, it can be said that without effecting change, mankind cannot survive for even a day.

¹. In a treatise I have written about the two basic pillars of knowledge (reality for the self and reality for us), the fact is mentioned that our knowledge is influenced by nine factors.

². There are two reasons for our inability to create the universe as it is supposed to be. One is that our knowledge about the universe is so limited and with the existence of a thing unknown, it cannot be known. In the words of Nizāmī,

گرداند کس که چون جهان کرد بیشک بتواند آن چنان کرد

The other reason is what we have mentioned earlier and whose implication is that the universe, in terms of the potentiality and actuality of its components and laws, has come into being and subsists in its optimum possible form. And overall change in it necessitates its destruction and bringing into existence another universe.

Man's Relationship with the Universe as It Should be

1. It is essential to know the universe as much as possible because knowing part of the world implies knowing a divine sign. This not only increases the knowledge of a person, but, affects his rational life, and contributes to his spiritual growth and perfection.
2. Changing parts of the world and conducting a pertinent research to secure an ideal life should not lead to the destruction of the environment. Regrettably, however, with utmost heedlessness the environment (land, air and sea) has been treated ruthlessly and is on the verge of total destruction.
3. Since nature has been provided by God for all, its use must not be in such a way that it is beneficial to some but detrimental to others. In this regard, the Holy Qur'an says:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ كُلَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

“It is He who created for you all that is in the earth then He turned to the heaven, and fashioned it into seven heavens, and He has knowledge of all things.”¹

Man's Relationship with Fellow Human Beings

This relationship also consists of two basic conditions: as it is and as it should be.

Firs Pilar: Man's Relationship with Fellow Human Beings as It is

1. Man is an animal that lives collectively. Is the cause of this phenomenon, like the collective life of ants and termites, his intrinsic need, or is it because of his many needs and potential, which cannot be addressed by individual life? The prevalent view is that man is by nature inclined to urban living and collective life.
2. There are various natural (relative), conventional (causative), internal, and external links that man has with his fellows, and each of these links is the source of specific rights and duties.
3. If there is no training, education, laws and penalties or, there is chaos, dictated by his animalistic, egocentric, hedonistic and self-seeking nature, man would be incapable of living idealistically.

¹. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:29.

4. There are two types of rivalries among human beings:

- Constructive rivalry is an agent of progress. It means accepting the equality and unity of all people along the path of rational life. It is obvious that this acceptance necessitates training and education as well as rational collective management. By realizing it human beings understand the life-giving Qur'ānic verse which states that all are equal to one and one is equal to all:

﴿أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَانَمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَانَمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا﴾

“Whoever kills a soul, without [its being guilty of] manslaughter or corruption on the earth, is as though he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves a life is as though he had saved all mankind.”¹

- Fatal rivalry or competition which is destructive. In every society whenever divine religion or morality is unable to control rivalries, fatal rivalry prevails over constructive rivalry. This is a specific manifestation of man's selfishness and egoism, which only divine religion or morality can regulate. The compulsive psychological element of vengeance, retribution and stringent legalism stands in the way of the fatal rivalry in the physical sense, not uprooting it from man's nature. Substantiating this point are the wars, revolutions and uncommon conditions of social life in which retribution and laws fail to function and the people emancipate themselves from the inner chain of fatalism and revolt, and sometimes they are more savage than the predators in grappling with each other.

Second Pilar: Man's Relationship with Fellow Human Beings as It Should be

1. Real relationships emanate from the different types of man's relations with his fellow human beings. We have mentioned the gist of these relationships under the heading “Man's relationship with his fellow human beings”.

2. Just division of labor among all members of society

¹. *Sūrat al-Mā' idah 5:27.*

3. Harmonizing society and using its collective wisdom and conscience
4. Dynamic and goal-oriented management of society
5. The most meritorious manager is one who regards all parts or members of the collective under his management as part of himself and himself as the collective “I” (personality).
6. Every person has to regard other members of society as members of the caravan that moves toward God along the path of “rational life”.
7. The members of any establishment must have the highest degree of expertise and commitment possible and assume responsibilities according to their disposition, but this disposition must not stand in the way of sublime perception and feelings for humanity.¹ For example, a judge with judicial expertise and commitment must never forget that he is a human being dealing with fellow human beings. An artist must acknowledge that he must always cultivate his artistic disposition with sublime feelings and perceptions.
8. In defending wholesome human life, all people are duty-bound, not only the state.
9. Defending honor, responsible freedom and other fundamental human rights in the order we have stated is obligatory to all.
10. Moral education of the people in society is essential. From the Islamic viewpoint, moral corruption of society is tantamount to its degeneration. The basic reason for the mission of the prophets, according to the saying of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ), is the perfection and refinement of excellent morality.
11. In social relations, the primary principle is social welfare, justice and benevolence for all. In this regard, the Holy Qur’ān says:

﴿لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ أَن تَبْرُوْهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ﴾

“Allah does not forbid you in regard to those who did not make war

¹ If a person is really committed, in principle his disposition must not stand in the way of his sublime feelings and perceptions about humanity. But, sometimes, since a particular person, as in the case of a judge, is bound to discharge prescribed duties, he may possibly commit a mistake due to various reasons. Since he is a human being, his being a judge must not make him forget his feelings and perceptions about human beings.

against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes, that you deal with them with kindness and justice.”¹

And in another verse, it states:

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنَّزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيُقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ﴾

“Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice.”²

It is to be noted that the primary law in man’s relationship with his fellows is justice. In his blessed instruction to Mālik al-Ashtar,³ the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) said:

وَأَشْعِرْ قَلْبَكَ الرَّحْمَةَ لِلرَّعِيَّةِ، وَالْمَحَاجَةَ لَهُمْ، وَاللُّطْفَ بِهِمْ، وَلَا تَكُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبُعاً ضَارِيًّا تَغْتَسِّمُ أَكْلَهُمْ، فَإِنَّهُمْ صِنَاعٌ إِمَّا أَخْ لَكَ فِي الدِّينِ، وَإِمَّا نَظِيرٌ لَكَ فِي الْخَلْقِ.

“O Mālik! You must create in your mind kindness, compassion and love for your subjects. Do not behave towards them as if you are a voracious and ravenous beast and your success lies in devouring them. Remember that among your subjects there are two kinds of people: those who have the same religion as you have; they are brothers to you, and those who have religions other than that of yours, they are human beings like you.”⁴

We shall now state in detail the conclusions, which we have earlier stated in brief.

As a whole, the perfectness of a religion lies in the perfectness of the set of principles of intrinsic and rational beliefs substantiated by clear proofs of material and spiritual guidance, as well as complete jurisprudence, which can address all individual and social problems of man in both the physical

¹. *Sūrat al-Mumtahanah* 60:8.

². *Sūrat al-Hadid* 57:25.

³. Mālik al-Ashtar: more fully, Mālik ibn Ḥārith from Nakha‘ and famous as al-Ashtar, was among the prominent commanders of Imām ‘Ali’s army and the governor appointed to Egypt by the Imām, but on his way to Egypt, he was killed through the conspiracy of Mu‘awiyah. For the text of the Imām’s famous instructions to him before setting forth to Egypt, see *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 53. [Trans.]

⁴. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 53. [Trans.]

and spiritual realms.

Commonly stated in Islamic philosophy and theology is the totality of fundamental beliefs such as the necessity for religion and the existence of the One and Only God who possesses all Attributes of Perfection like knowledge, power, wisdom, and justice. With the help of the ‘internal proof’ (reason, pure human nature), and the ‘external proof’, i.e. prophets, mankind is guided towards the lofty goal of life. Man’s need for the existence of proof (*hujjah*) is a constant need. As such, the Shī‘ah perspective, after the Holy Prophet of Islam (ṣ), the pure Imāms (‘a) are the proofs of God on earth. Like the Prophets (‘a), the Imāms are infallible (*ma’sūm*) and are immune from sin and error. After the Imāms come the accomplished scholars (‘ulamā’) and jurists (*fuqahā*) who are impervious to carnal urges and possess extraordinary justness. Their justness and knowledge of the totality of the roots and branches of religion are below that of the Infallibles (*ma’sūmīn*) (‘a). The basis of this claim is the famous tradition which states:

وَأَمَّا مِنْ الْفَقِهَاءِ مَنْ كَانَ صَاتِنَا لِنَفْسِهِ، مُخَالِفًا لِهَا، مُطِيعًا لِأَمْرِ مَوْلَاهُ، فَلِلْعَوْامِ أَنْ يَقْلِدُوهُ.

“And of the *fuqahā*, whoever is wary of himself, opposes his carnal desires and obeys the command of His Master, it is incumbent upon the people to follow him.”

It can be inferred from the term *sā’inan* (wary) that the justness (*adālah*), which is one of the conditions set for the *marja’ al-taqlīd*,¹ is above the term *adālah* in jurisprudence (*fīqh*), deducible from the *sahīhah* (authentic narration) of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Ya‘fūr.²

This is the meaning of ‘*adālah* of the *marja’ al-taqlīd* in the Shī‘ah world, that he is not even supposed to entertain in his mind the wish or inclination to go against religion and morality. This is the very meaning of “wariness”

¹ *Marja’ al-taqlīd* (literally means ‘source of emulation’) : a scholar of proven learning and piety whose authoritative rulings one follows in matters of religious practice. [Trans.]

² The description of ‘*adālah* in the *sahīhah* of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Abī Ya‘fūr on the authority of Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is as follows: “I asked the Imām (‘a): ‘How to know the justness of a person from among Muslims through which his testimony in favor or against them can be accepted?’ The Imām (‘a) said: ‘Whoever is known in modesty, purity and wariness in food and sexual desire, whose hands and tongue are free from error and shuns away from major sins, God gives good news to him.’” Shaykh al-Anṣārī, *Al-Makāsib al-Muharramah*, p. 325.

and “opposing carnal desire”. It has been the observance of this condition of purity throughout the history of Shī‘ism that the Shī‘ah have unconditionally followed the *marāji‘ al-taqlīd* in self-sacrifice and struggled along the correct path.

It can be concluded from the previous discussions that the perfectness of Islamic jurisprudence includes the perfectness of laws, which help plan a social life that is responsive to man’s relationship with fellow human beings.

Salient Features of Islamic Jurisprudence

We shall now embark on examining the salient features of Islamic jurisprudence.

First Feature

Fiqh means “knowledge of religious laws based upon their circumstantial proofs”.¹ The subject of jurisprudence covers all human actions—inward or outward, spoken or unspoken. From this definition, we can realize that jurisprudence is different from its sources. Juristic views are within the context of Islamic sources; that is, the Qur’ān, the *Sunnah*, consensus (*ijmā‘*), and reason (*aql*). This does not mean, however, that Islamic jurisprudence is identical with the juristic views of the jurists. This is also true in the case of Islamic philosophy vis-à-vis the views of Muslim philosophers in the sense that all Muslim philosophers have formulated their philosophies within the framework of the Islamic outlook, thinking that their views are consistent and harmonious with Islam. This does not mean, however, that Islamic philosophy is identical with the views of those philosophers. The existing facts in Islamic sources are one thing and the *fūqahā*’s understanding of them as ‘jurisprudence’ is something else. This is the connotation of classifying *fūqahā* as *muṣīb* (well-chosen) and *mukhtīr* (mistaken).

Therefore, the basic source of the perfectness of jurisprudence, legal system and judiciary program must be sought from the Book of Allah, the *Sunnah*, *ijmā‘*, and *aql*, although the interpretation of the *fūqahā* from the primary sources also gives additional knowledge of the various aspects of juristic

¹ Of course, by ‘knowledge’ we mean the means of discovering the realities, whether its basis is intrinsic such as knowledge of rationally independent laws and knowledge of the essential decrees in jurisprudence, or its basis can be proven through rational prepositions and other primary sources of jurisprudence.

rules. This is particularly true if we consider the fact that [even] *fuqahā*'s occasional juristic slips in the course of deducing laws (*istimbātāt*) has a juristic significance.

Second Feature

The right to a wholesome life is the most fundamental rule throughout the sources in jurisprudence, and deviation from it in whatever way imaginable is *harām*. Regarding the greatness of man's life according to the jurisprudential sources of Islam, we shall point out some proofs:

1. According to the divine value system, every human being is equivalent to all human beings:

﴿مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَاتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَانَمَا قَاتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَانَمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا﴾

*"That is why We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever takes a life, without [its being guilty of] manslaughter or corruption on the earth, is as though he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves a life is as though he had saved all mankind."*¹

The formula of the human value according to this verse and other Islamic sources is as follows:

$$1 = \text{all and all} = 1$$

We must also bear in mind that "Children of Israel" [in this context] does not refer to a specific race or nation; rather, it refers to those people who have truly followed the religion of Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) ('a), and any community or nation that follows the religion of Abraham must regard the above formula as a definite principle. For this reason, it must be stated that Islam, Christianity or any other religion whose Abrahamic origin has been proved must subscribe to the abovementioned principle.

1. No law or duty in Islam is suspended except when it harms human life, nor applicable to a person who is to be harmed; for example, the non-compulsoriness of ablution (*wudū*) to a person for whom the use of water is harmful, and the non-compulsoriness of *Hajj* pilgrimage for a person who is incapable of travelling.

2. Any person who is downtrodden and abject in life and can emancipate

¹. *Sūrat al-Mā' idah* 5:32.

himself from this state, yet he does not strive for it shall earn Divine wrath:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَالِبِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمْ كُشِّمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعِفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَنَهَا جَرَوْا فِيهَا فَأَوْلَئِكَ مَا وَاهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾

‘Indeed those whom the angels take away while they are wronging themselves, they ask, ‘What state were you in?’ They reply, ‘We were abased in the land.’ They say, ‘Was not Allah’s earth vast enough so that you might migrate in it?’ The refuge of such shall be hell, and it is an evil destination.’¹

3. Islamic jurisprudential sources have 32 legal provisions regarding the rights of animals.² It is obvious that a divine religion which has prescribed the rights of animals, must have provided a perfect legal system for human rights.

In view of these two points, it can be established that the basis of Islamic jurisprudence is man. Therefore, the scope of Islamic jurisprudence is equivalent to human dimensions of ‘rational life’.

Third Feature

Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) or the legal system responds to all problems in life by opening the door of *ijtihād*³ in all periods.⁴ In previous years, the

¹. *Sūrat al-Nisā’* 4:97.

². See *Tarjumeh wa Tafsīr-e Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 12, pp. 165-185.

³. *Ijtihād*: juristic derivation of laws applicable to new conditions on the basis of the general principles laid down in the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*. [Trans.]

⁴. If we regard jurisprudence (*fiqh*) as “knowledge of religious laws based upon their circumstantial proofs,” then it must be noted that it is a set of laws—pertaining to different subjects which man encounters in life. The function of *fiqh* is to state the ruling for every subject. In other words, the role of *fiqh* is to specify the ruling for every issue. In reality, if *fiqh* is perfect, its perfectness is due to the universality and comprehensiveness of its laws as well as to the quality and nature of rulings it states. Those who have imagined that if we subscribe to the correct proposition that “There is a ruling for every subject or issue,” in reality we have also believed in the wrong conclusion that “All our problems are jurisprudential in nature and jurisprudence has the solution to all our problems.” Such fellows have actually confused two things, without knowing that the proposition “There is a ruling for every subject or issue” does not necessarily follow that “All our problems are jurisprudential in nature and jurisprudence has the solution to

all our problems.” It is wrong to say that “All our problems are jurisprudential in nature and jurisprudence has the solution to all our problems.” Yes, *fiqh* which has a ruling for every problem does not claim that by stating their rulings, all issues and problems can be solved. For example, if *fiqh* rules that burying nuclear wastes in any region is *harām* (unlawful) as it causes environmental pollution and endangers the lives of people and animals, the same *fiqh* does not claim that by stating this ruling, it has also presented the solution and way of preventing the burying of nuclear wastes. Of course, it is necessary, for the jurists (*fuqahā*) must constantly supervise the presentation of all solutions pertaining to different subjects in order to avoid any contradiction between scientific methods and solutions, on one hand, and religious laws and guidelines, on the other hand.

In other words, *firstly*, *fiqh* must have supervision over all programs and methods experimental sciences offer so that these programs and methods do not contradict or encroach upon religious laws and guidelines. *Secondly*, if we say the role or function of *fiqh* is not to present a method or program, but to state the rulings on subjects. This statement is only correct in some instances. It means that in most cases, *fiqh* states the rulings on issues and subjects but there are also cases in which it also presents the program or method of solving a problem. For example, in case the husband and wife can no longer live together harmoniously, *fiqh* has specifically prescribed divorce (*talaq*). But at the same time, the sources of jurisprudence (for example, in the Holy Qur'an) have offered a method or program which is suitable to solve husband and wife differences, and that is, to appoint a wise person from the wife's family and his counterpart from the husband's family to investigate and solve the couple's problem in this way. It is to be noted that in such a case, jurisprudence has not only stated a ruling but also presented a method or program for solving the couple's dispute. Moreover, even here, granted that jurisprudence does not offer a program for solving the couple's problem, is not the stipulation of divorce, in itself, a sort of program for solving the lack of understanding and harmony between husband and wife?

Here, it is noteworthy that sometimes a certain ruling in itself is only a matter of stating a ruling for a certain subject or problem, but for another subject or problem, it is a kind of program or method. For example, the stipulation of divorce is a legal and logical method or program of solving the issue or problem of dispute between husband and wife that can no longer live together. Yet, the same stipulation of divorce for a disputing couple (but not to the extent that they can no longer live together in harmony) is a mere ruling, and not a method or program for solving dispute.

Thirdly, unless the accurate definition of the program and the nature and conditions of its connection to other things are not clarified, one cannot easily state the correct meaning of the proposition, “Jurisprudence gives a ruling but does not offer a

Faculty of Law of the University of Paris, held a conference with the aim of discussing Islamic jurisprudence. The theme was “Islamic Jurisprudence Week”, and a group of orientalists and law professors from European and Muslim countries were invited. During the conference sessions, legal experts of France and other countries, as well as well-known orientalists, acknowledged the comprehensiveness of Islamic jurisprudence, confirming its competence for human societies in all periods. During the conference, the head of lawyers in Paris said: “I do not know how to reconcile these two things. On the one hand, through various propaganda campaigns, it is known everywhere that Islamic jurisprudence, notwithstanding its profundity, is not competent to serve as the legislative foundation of the needs of contemporary societies. On the other hand, in these conference sessions, in the course of presentation of scholarly studies and intellectual inquiries by experts in the field, I have learned certain points that refute those misconceptions through solid proofs and existing textual evidence and rulings.” At the end of the conference, a resolution signed by the participants who were lawyers and legislators was issued, confirming the dynamism of Islamic jurisprudence and its competence to respond to all problems of human society. At the closing program, all participants expressed their interest in continuing the “Islamic Jurisprudence Week” but unfortunately, due to some reasons, it was not continued.¹

Fourth Feature

A perfect religion refers to the intrinsic rational beliefs substantiated by clear

program or method.” If “program” refers to the logical guiding mechanism of a subject to its intended purpose while taking into account the existing obstacles and possibilities, it must be said that each of the jurisprudential rulings (in most cases) on each subject is only a ruling and not a program. Yet, the totality of the same jurisprudential rulings is a program in relation of man, in the sense that as a set of dos and don’ts, these rulings guide a person, while taking into account the existing obstacles and potentials in him, to a sublime goal. Therefore, each of the laws is a ruling for a subject pertaining to a person in one way or another. Yet, as a whole, the same laws are not rulings for the subject “man” but rather a program for the guidance of man for a rational and noble life. Apart from the abovementioned points, it is worth mentioning that the totality of these laws by themselves—by taking into account the *fiqhā*’s deduction of laws and subjects which is at the disposal of an expert—can be used as programs for solving legal problems on different subjects. [Ed.]

¹ Tāhā ‘Abd al-Bāqī, *Dawlat al-Qur’ān*, pp. 187-189.

proofs guiding man in all his dimensions—physical and spiritual—while perfect jurisprudence offers the solution to all legal problems—individual and social—in the four types of relationship (man's relationship with himself, God, the universe, and fellow human beings). Therefore, any legal or even moral system is “Islamic” commensurate to the degree of its consistency and compatibility with Islamic beliefs, jurisprudence and laws. For instance, in societies where the people believe in the One and Only God and His Attributes of Glory, they believe in Islam to that extent. Societies whose people refrain from killing, committing adultery, using intoxicants, telling lies, vilification, treason, and violating human rights actually observe the Islamic laws to that extent. People who regard order, law and honesty in life as essential and act upon them observe Islam to that extent. For this reason, when one of the Islamic figures returned home from his travel to some Western countries where he studied their way of life, he was asked to comment on the state of affairs there as compared to his own country. He said that if a person from an officially Muslim country travels to some Western countries and imagines that he goes to an absolutely un-Islamic society is absolutely wrong.

Fifth Feature

The aim of other legal systems organize the wellbeing of the fourth type of relationship (man's relationship with his fellow human beings) in natural social life, and attempt to actually make it possible, by regulating the insatiable desires of man that lead to fatal rivalry. As to what extent they have correctly understood the stated goal is another story. However, Islamic jurisprudence regulates the insatiable desires of man through principles and laws that are compatible with all four types of relationship (man's relationship with himself, God and the universe). In order to explain this point, we can compare Islamic jurisprudence to other legal systems of other societies as mentioned by a legal expert named Robert H. Jackson,¹ ex-US Attorney General. He says:

For an American, there is a fundamental contradiction between law and religion. In the West, even in countries in which there is a profound belief in the separation of church and state, the legal system

¹. Robert Houghwout Jackson (1892-1954): United States Attorney General (1940–1941), an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court (1941–1954) and also the chief United States prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials. [Trans.]

is considered a secular matter in which exigency of the time plays a vital role. Of course, religious influences in the evolution of law have been very effective and strong. The Pentateuch that consists of the first five books of the Torah and the Christian teaching and church rules—each of them has contributed in our legal thought. In the past unusual or uncommon times influential statesmen would appoint judges and legislators from the clergy. Be that as it may, law has still remained a mundane matter. Legislatures for the enactment of laws, and courts for their execution, have existed. And these are considered institutions of this world that have something to do with the state and not with the church or religion. As such, our law in America does not determine religious duties. On the contrary, it cogently eliminates them. Law in America has only a limited link with the discharging of moral duties. In fact, an American might be morally obedient to the law, and at the same time, a mean and corrupt person.¹

It can be clearly inferred from the above passage that nowadays, laws in the United States and other Western societies, are codified for the management of secular life only; in the physical life of the members of society in the context of coexistence,,a purely mechanical life. In such systems, no individual or group recognizes a duty above the law even if it is related to the life, honor and responsible freedom of others. For example, if an individual, a group or society faces an epidemic, a bloodthirsty murderer or an exploitative system, no one has the right or duty to take steps to prevent it. In the legal systems of Western societies, man's origin, end and goal of life does not signify. His rights and duties revolve around a mechanical, purely natural dimension of life. Obviously, Islamic law cannot allow man with such nobility to be humiliated to that extent. In continuation, Jackson says:

But, on the contrary, in Islamic laws the fountainhead of legislation is the will of God which is discovered and made explicit by His Prophet Muhammad. This law and this will of God considers all believers a single community although they belong to various tribes and nations and have different conditions and locations, far and near. Here, religion is a wholesome force that binds the community together, and

¹. Majid Khadūrī and Herbert J. Lybsny, with the introduction by Robert H. Jackson, *Law in Islam*, pp. i-iii.

not nationality and geographical boundaries. Here, the state itself is subservient and subject to the Qur'ān and there is no more room for another legislator, let alone giving room for any sort of criticism, skepticism and hypocrisy. For the believer, this world is a passageway to the other world, which is a better one. The Qur'ān specifies the rules, laws and manner of behaving with one another and another group so as to ensure a wholesome change from this world to the next world. It is impossible to distinguish political or judicial theories and views from the Prophet's teachings—teachings that determine the mode of behavior in relation to religious principles as well as the personal and sociopolitical way of life of all. These teachings determine more duties and responsibilities than rights for man.¹

Due to his insufficient knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, Jackson was unaware that in our jurisprudence, duties are of two types:

1. Personal duties (like acts of worship), and
1. 2. Mutual duties of individuals, societies and the state

Every duty prescribed to an individual, society or state breeds a right, and the emergence of a right necessitates the existence of a duty.

In interpreting the duties prescribed by Islam to the people, Jackson says:

That is, moral commitments which an individual is required to fulfill are given more attention, and no position on earth can exempt him from fulfilling them. And if he disobeys, his future life will be endangered.²

Another mistake of Jackson's is as follows:

Firstly, the term “moral commitments” requiring “fulfillment” is not appropriate because the merit of morality lies on its being voluntary. Thus, moral commitments neither mean natural fatalism nor are based upon compulsory duty.

Secondly, Jackson should bear in mind that the discharge of duties of individuals, groups and the government in a society is impossible without the materialization of rights. He himself acknowledges, thus:

¹ *Ibid.*, Jackson's “Introduction,” p. iii.

² *Ibid.*

The teachings related to religious or philosophical principles reject Islamic laws. The fact, however, is that the same system considered to be impractical has achieved astounding success. Approximately one century after the death of Muhammad, his vibrant and unifying religion—although devoid of a well-established state, a permanent army and common political ideals—was able to mould his tribe and nation to reach the shores of Africa, overrun Spain and threaten France.¹

It is necessary for those particularly in Muslim societies, who, in spite of having no sufficient knowledge, talk about religion and Islamic jurisprudence, to pay attention to the following lines:

1. “The fact, however, is that the same system considered to be impractical has achieved astounding success.”
2. The next passage of Jackson is as follows:

The main point is that we have just started knowing the fact that this religion, which is the youngest in the world, has formulated a jurisprudence that gives a sense of justice to millions of people under the scorching skies of Africa, Asia and thousands of other people living in American countries.²

This statistical data was true approximately 30 years ago. Based on recent statistical data, the world Muslim population has reached about one billion and two hundred million. Eight million of them live in Western Europe and ten million in America and other non-Muslim countries.

Jackson [also] says:

Although it is possible that in relation to religious inspiration, we are doubtful of its rights, the said rights give us very important lessons in the implementation of laws. Now, the time has come not to consider us as the only people who want justice or understand the meaning of justice. This is because in their legal systems, Muslim countries have been trying to attain this goal and their experiences give vital lessons to us.³

¹. *Ibid.*

². *Ibid.*, p. x.

³. *Ibid.*

If the Islamic laws or jurisprudence was identical or similar to others, the above passage would have been totally senseless.

The last part of Jackson's passage contains a very significant confession, which can serve as a lesson to those who talk ignorantly about Islamic laws or jurisprudence. He says:

It usually happens that in the course of time legal terms connote a set of beliefs and ideas, especially for the neophytes [in law]. For example, our terms like "according to the due process," "courts' opinion," "based on justice," "trial before the jury," and "judicial review" have meaning for the English-speaking people which cannot be understood by other people. The same is true with many Islamic legal terms. It is possible for an Islamic legal term to have many meanings to interpret, which we may possibly interpret, but since we do not have a similar term in our laws, we cannot find a suitable legal term for it.¹

In order to complete the earlier discussions about the salient features of Islamic jurisprudence, it is necessary to have an overview of the types of general rules based on the principal sources of jurisprudence, viz. the Qur'ān, *Sunnah*, consensus (*ijmā'*), and reason ('*aql*).

Types of General Rules Based on Principal Sources

1. *Qawā'id muṣarrahah* or *qawā'id manṣūṣah*. This specifies rules (*qawā'id*) that are stipulated in the Qur'ān or the *Sunnah*:

- *Qā'idah 'Lā ḥarār wa lā ḥirār'*. This rule (*qā'idah*) can be deduced from many textual references, including the famous story of Samarah ibn Jundab. In the said story, the Prophet (s) is reported to have said, "*Lā ḥarār wa lā ḥirār*". That is, in Islam there is no law that brings harm or loss to the discharger of duty or to another person.
- *Qawā'id nafī 'usr wa haraj*. This rule says that no law which brings difficulty and adversity is imposed in Islam,. This rule is deduced from the following verses:

﴿مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ﴾

“Allah does not desire to put you to hardship.”²

¹. *Ibid.*

². *Sūrat al-Mā'idah* 5:6.

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ لَكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ﴿١﴾

“Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you.”¹

2. *Qawā'id mustanbatah* or *iṣtiyādiyyah*. Such rules are not inferred from a specific text but taken from the totality of the sections (*abwāb*) in jurisprudence that cover the purport of the rule; for example:

- Pondering on what is more important in cases of contradiction of two laws, such as the permission to pass by an area without the owner's permission, to save someone from drowning. Since saving a life is more important than passing by an area without its owner's permission, the permission to pass by (to save life) takes precedence over what is important (the owner's right to his property).
- Every contract and promise, nay every kind of commitment, is based on intention. In other words,

العقود وما قام مقامها تتبع القصود

“Contracts and what follow them depend on intentions.”

As it is obvious, such rules are based upon the dictates of reason.

3. *Qawā'id 'aqliyyah badīhiyyah* (axiomatic rational rules). Universal propositions which are based on the dictates of reason are called ‘rational rules’ (*qawā'id 'aqliyyah*); for example:

- *Qā'idah naẓm* (rule on order): Since the social life of human beings is impossible without order and harmony between objectives and means, every action and idea that fosters it are necessary. Reason considers them obligatory.
- *Qā'idah daf' darar muhtamil* (rule on preventing probable harm): In every situation in which there is a reasonable probability of harm, reason would consider giving it a rule. Of course, if one regards this rule as part of *qā'idah lā darar wa lā dirār*, it will be covered by that general rule.²

3. *Banā-ye 'uqalā'* (agreed upon by the men of reason): The difference

¹ *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:185.

² After this discourse, we shall separately examine the ‘rationality’ of the majority of jurisprudential rules.

between ‘rational laws’ (*ahkām-e ‘aqlī*) and those agreed upon by the men of reason (*banā’-ye ‘uqalā’*) is that, there is no specific proof supporting the propositions agreed upon by them, but are confirmed and acted upon by men of reason for their being men of reason. Meanwhile, rational propositions or laws can be actually proven by appropriate proofs or, like rational axioms (*badihiyyāt-e ‘aqliyyah*), to prove them does not require any proof, or they are like substantiated propositions whose proofs are embedded within; technically, they are called “propositions with accompanying syllogisms” (*qadāyā qiyāsātuhā ma ‘ahā*).

4. *Mansūs al-‘illah* (cause being explicitly stated in the text): concerning the reason for a juristic ruling, whenever the reason or cause is *mansūs* the said ruling is called *mansūs al-‘illah*. The scope of the said ruling depends on the scope of the cause. For example, in the traditions related to the ruling on *zakāt* (poor-rate),¹ the elimination of poverty in society is the cause. So, the items liable for *zakāt* must be increased until the elimination of poverty in society.

5. *Tanqīh manāt qat ‘ī*: The term used refers to the set of rulings whose cause is not explicitly mentioned. However, in view of the truthfulness of the ruling and definite motive behind it, its cause can certainly be identified, as in the case of the prohibition of hoarding. Apart from its being rational, its ruling can be deduced from numerous traditions. Although the cause behind this very important ruling cannot be found in the text of the traditions, by considering the nature of the items which are forbidden to hoard and the span of time of doing it, it would be certain that the real cause behind the prohibition is to remove the emergency needs in human life. By citing this cause, the jurisprudent (*faqīh*) can give a ruling on the prohibition of hoarding items indispensable for the lives of people; for example, medicines, vehicles and telecommunication devices.

6. *Istishmām fiqhī* (juristic acumen): In many cases, there may be no specific proof to support a ruling, or the proof is ambiguous, or there may be proofs but they contradict each other. In such a case, by taking into account the totality of principles, general rules, proofs, criteria [and wisdom] of the jurisprudential sources inculcated in his mind, the jurisprudent can discern a given ruling through intuitive jurisprudential acumen. For instance, in

¹ *Zakāt*: the tax levied on various categories of wealth and spent on the purposes specified in *Sūrat al-Tawbah* 9:60. [Trans.]

discussing whether intention (*niyyah*) is a part (*juz'*) or condition (*shart*) of the acts of worship, some high-ranking jurisprudents maintain that “it is more akin to condition” (*wa bi 'sh-shart ashbah*); that is, intention is more likely to be a condition rather than being a part of the acts of worship.

The outcomes of the above rulings and cases are the following:

1. Rulings on duties (*ahkām taklīfiyyah*);
2. Rulings on positions (*ahkām wad'iyyah*);
3. Primary actual rulings (*ahkām wāqi'i awwalī*);
4. Secondary actual rulings (*ahkām wāqi'i thānawī*);
5. Primary outward rulings (*ahkām zāhirī awwalī*);
6. Secondary outward rulings (*ahkām zāhirī thānawī*);
7. Rulings based on the jurist's guardianship (*wilāyat al-faqīh*);
8. Legal topics (*mawdū'āt shar'iyyah*); and
9. Customary topics (*mawdū'āt 'urfīyyah*).

The Role of Islamic Jurisprudence in Organizing Rational Life

Islamic jurisprudence is in charge of organizing and reforming all aspects of rational human life. In the same manner, it is logical that “scientific and philosophical knowledge is in charge of organizing and correcting all human perceptions about the four types of relationship. Obviously, the elements of the stated primary sources such as sensory perceptions, observations, experiments, intellection, power of discovery, and other means utilized by man to increase and deepen his knowledge have come into existence through the same factors.¹ Man has remained the same for the past hundreds of centuries and can address his alterable and inalterable, primary and essential needs and continue by using the same elements and sources.

The substance of the sources of Islamic jurisprudence is based upon natural disposition (*fitrah*), sound reason ('*aql*), justice and man-centeredness, and no intrinsic change has taken place in them or the meaning of justice, which is the most fundamental factor in organizing individual and social human

¹. We have said that man is hundreds of centuries old because some authorities in related social sciences are of the opinion that for the past four thousand years, no difference in the senses, mind and physiological conditions of man can be witnessed.

life. The substance of Islamic jurisprudence is substantiated by decisive proofs clearly deducible from the Qur'ān, and authentic traditions.

1. Regarding *fitrah*, the following noble verse is cited:

﴿فَاقْرُمْ وَجْهَكُلِّدِينِ حَبِيبًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ﴾

*"So set your heart on the religion as a people of pure faith, the origination of Allah according to which He originated mankind. There is no altering Allah's creation."*¹

2. Concerning reason ('*aql*), there are many verses which enjoin people to follow the dictates of reason; for example,

﴿أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْإِيمَانِ وَتَنْسِوُنَ الْفُسُوكَمْ وَأَشْمَمْ تَلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ﴾

"Will you bid others to piety and forget yourselves, while you recite the Book? Do you not apply reason?"²

Similarly, there are numerous authentic traditions that clearly establish reason as (*hujjah*) the 'inward proof' in contrast to the 'outward proof', which refers to the prophets. For example, regarding the motive behind the mission of the prophets, Imām 'Alī ('a) said:

وَيَشِّرُّوا لَهُمْ دَفَائِنَ الْعُقُولِ.

"...to unveil before them the hidden virtues of wisdom..."³

3. Regarding justice, Qur'ānic verses and authentic traditions support the indispensability of justice in organizing and molding human life both in individual and collective forms; for example,

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ﴾

"Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice."⁴

﴿وَنَّمَّتْ كَلِمَاتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَتِهِ وَهُوَ الْسَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾

"The word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and justice. Nothing can change His words, and He is the All-hearing, the All-

¹. *Sūrat ar-Rūm* 30:30.

². *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:44.

³. *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 1.

⁴. *Sūrat al-Hadid* 57:25.

*knowing.*¹

The Functional Scope of Islamic Jurisprudence

The functional scope of Islamic jurisprudence includes stating the laws, rights and duties of the human beings with regards to the real human needs—both alterable and inalterable needs—in relation to the four types of relationship from the perspective of their being obligatory, recommendatory or permissible (superficial needs being excluded). In order to have a concise view of this scope, it is necessary to pay attention to the meaning of need and its types.

Real and Superficial Needs

For every being—human being and others—there exists a legal and natural desirable identity which determines its real nature in the universe. Everything needs identity for its preservation and protection; identity, in turn, needs it. For example, the ideal identity of man's being is good health and wellbeing. As a result, wellbeing is a need of a person.

Real needs can be classified into two:

1. Permanent needs are always there due to the constant dependence of the ideal identity of man on them; for example, wellbeing, knowledge, responsible freedom, honor, dignity, and the like.
2. Alterable needs: things, which enter the realm of 'rational life'; for example, means of transportation, international linkages, technological varieties, spread of diverse fields of knowledge, and the like.

It is clear that self-centered individuals will never be contented with satisfying their real needs. Instead, they will introduce pressing artificial needs after which they will be compelled to enact laws and rules pertaining to those needs; for example, the laws and rules pertaining to usury (*ribā*). The essence of man's need for money is as follows:

1. As the means of exchange between two sets of goods, two sets of services, goods and service, and vice versa
2. As the index of monetary value which the money owner can use to acquire goods and services needed for society
3. As the means of acquiring wealth

¹. *Sūrat al-An ‘ām* 6:115.

The human need for laws and rights pertaining to the said matters about money is an essential need, and Islamic jurisprudence explicitly addresses those needs based on texts or rules extracted from reliable sources. Yet, hundreds of legal items related to the legality of usury has no place in Islamic jurisprudence because the need for such legal items stems from extreme self-centeredness and economic domineering and is a superficial one. It should not be asserted that Islamic jurisprudence is insufficient because it does not consider the essence of usury legitimate, let alone legislate and enact laws and rules for it.

Similarly, it is also possible for certain societies to repel existing conditions and rules governing sexual relations and regard illegitimate relations as legal (whether with similar or opposite class (*ṣinfl*))¹ and then to enact specific laws for such relations! However, since it does not recognize illegitimate relations, Islamic jurisprudence also regards the need for laws pertaining to them as artificial. Like other artificial items coupled with the tricks of selfish individuals, it creates artificial demands and uninformed people will be drawn to them, thinking that the created demands are indeed natural and needed.

Jurisprudential Rules are Intrinsic and Rational

We need to talk about the rational or intrinsic nature of the universal rules in Islamic jurisprudence.

The rules and principles stipulated in the Book (Qur'ān), *Sunnah* and those inferred from the proofs, is reliable. The difference between rule (*qā'idah*), principle (*asl*) and circumstantial evidence (*amārah*) lies in the extent of revealing realities. Revealing reality by means of circumstantial evidence (such as Qur'ānic verses, traditions (*ahādīth*) and rational rulings) precedes rule and principle, while revealing reality, by means of rule and principle, only removes doubt and confusion.

The fact that the forms of devotional worship ('ibādāt) are not intrinsic or rational does not mean they oppose natural disposition or reason. Instead, it signifies silence of the two (*fitrah* and '*aql*) from explaining the reasons behind the specific forms of worship; for example, the reason behind two

¹ It is not appropriate to apply the term 'sex' (*jins*) for man and woman because man and woman are two classes (*ṣinfl*) of the genus 'human being' which is one of the sexual genera (*anwā'*) called 'animal'. Thus, it is more accurate to use the term 'class' than 'sex'.

rak'ahs of *fajr* prayer and loud recitations (*jahr*) in it, and the seven times circumambulation (*tawāf*) of the *Ka'bah* in a specific manner. However, *fitrah* and *'aql* can be presented to the same extent as much as the need of worship can be proven to man. Let us elaborate. After accepting man's need to be in the Axis of Absolute Perfection (God, the Glorious and Exalted), the necessity of worship with sincere intention, free from any motive for other than God, is one of the most axiomatic realization of the natural disposition and reason that must be followed. It is obvious that if we limit ourselves only to mental vigilance (*murāqibah*) and do not verbally recite anything or perform specific movements, like kneeling down (*rukū'*), prostration (*sujūd*), circumambulation, with specific conditions of time and place, illogical claims will replace these acts of worship with the passage of time, and extinguish the very essence of worship. As stated in '*Ilal al-Sharāyi'*,¹ by leaving the quality and quantity of worship to the discretion of the people, its importance will gradually fade away. Furthermore, these qualitative and quantitative aspects have subtle signs which can clearly be discerned by a sound mind; for example, bending in *rukū'* is a gesture of humility and placing the forehead on the ground is the utmost sign of surrender and submission.

Jurisprudential rules refer to universal propositions applicable to particular cases. In giving a ruling on particular cases, those propositions shall be referred to; for example, the rule of "neither loss nor harm" (*lā darar wa lā darār*) and the principle of the exigency of transactions. In acting upon these propositions, the *mujtahid* and the *muqallid*² are the same. They are both obliged to abide by them. However, the jurisprudent (*faqīh*), depends on the rules of jurisprudence to prove universal propositions.

The rules cited in jurisprudence can be generally divided into two.

A) The rules provided for in the primary sources; for example, the rules of "negation of difficulty" (*nafī' asar wa haraj*) and "neither loss nor harm" as provided for in this Qur'ānic verse:

¹ '*Ilal al-Sharāyi*': an important treatise by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq (died 329 AH) on the philosophy of Islamic tenets and practices. [Trans.]

² *Muqallid* (literally, imitator, emulator or follower): the person who follows a certain *marja'* *al-taqlīd* (source of emulation or reference authority) in matters of religious jurisprudence. [Trans.]

﴿مَا يُبِدِ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ﴾

“Allah does not desire to put you to hardship.”¹

- B) The rules inferred by reliable proofs; for example, the preponderance of what is more important (*ahamm*) to what is important (*muhimm*) in cases of contradiction.

In jurisprudence, the ways of discovering realities differ, but all of them are either supported by the perception of pure nature, such as *yaqīn* (certainty) and *qata'* (suspension of judgment), or reason. For example, rational rulings that revoke the rulings' requirement, and data, whose being discovered is completed by the Legislator, such as Qur'ānic verses, whose indication of the reality is abstract, and traditions, whose issuance (being authentic) is not definite. However, by complementing their proofs by other means, their potential of revealing legal realities is rational. Meanwhile, the principles that are cited to remove any confusion in doubtful cases, such as the principle of disavowal [of the polytheists] (*barā'at*) and the principle of preponderance of eliminating harm over gaining profit, are rational propositions, although their being proofs can also be consolidated by the endorsement of the Islamic legislator.

In view of their functional scope in jurisprudence, jurisprudential rules can be generally divided into two:

- A) General rules that can be implemented in all sections (*abwāb*) of jurisprudence
 B) Particular rules that can be cited in some sections of jurisprudence.

Examples of General Rules

1. The negation of harm and loss: “There is neither harm nor loss in Islam.”
2. The negation of difficulty and trouble: “Allah does not desire to put you to hardship.”²
3. The negation of punishment for the action of someone whose intention is good:

﴿مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ﴾

“There is no [cause for] blaming the virtuous.”³

¹. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah* 5:6.

². *Sūrat al-Mā'idah* 5:6.

³. *Sūrat al-Tawbah* (or *Barā'ah*) 9:91.

4. The preponderance of what is more important over what is important in cases of contradiction between the two.
5. Commonality in the discharge of religious duty:

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا كَافَةً لِلنَّاسِ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا﴾

“We did not send you except as a bearer of good news and warner to all mankind.”¹

6. The lack of interference between cause and effect
7. The primacy of correctness: “Let your Muslim brother act properly.”
8. The primacy of the correctness of the obliged person’s (*mukallaf*) action in relation to himself; that is, according to the level of awareness and willpower, every person relies on whose action is correct.
9. The primacy of the correctness of things: this principle is not limited to a Muslim or believer’s action but rather includes all things, states and human actions in the domain of nature’s rational laws.
10. The elimination of harm takes precedence over gaining of profit:

دفع الضرر أولى من جلب النفع

11. Exigencies suspend prohibitions:

الضرورات تبيح أطهورات.

12. The suspension of prohibitions is commensurate to the extent of exigencies:

الضرورات تقدر بقدره.

13. Evil and harm must be eliminated as much as possible:

الشر يدفع.

14. The more general (*a'am*) and the majority (*aghlab*) can be a preferred item or indication of a ruling:

الظن يلحق الشيء بالأعم الأغلب.

15. Every religious duty that cannot be discharged in full should not be abandoned in full:

¹. *Sūrat al-Saba'* 34:28.

ما لا يدرك كله لا يترك كله.
الميسور لا يسقط بالمسور.
إن أمرتكم بشيء فأنتوا منه ما استطعتم.

16. The impermissibility of helping in sin and unlawfulness:

﴿وَلَا تَعَاوُنُوا عَلَىٰ أَلِّيمٍ وَالْعَدُونَ﴾

17. The applicability of the rulings on position in relation to different conditions; for example, warranty on squandering the property of another person irrespective of his age, level of knowledge (in managing his property) or any other condition pertaining to the attainment of maturity or age of responsibility.

18. The compulsion of something to a community which it considers incumbent upon itself:

أَلرْمُوهُمْ بِمَا آذَنُوكُمْ بِهِ أَنفُسُهُمْ.

19. The principle of acting upon the previous religious codes of law (*sharāyi'*) provided that they do not contradict Islamic laws:

اسْتَصْحَابُ الْشَّرَائِعِ الْسَّابِقَةِ.

20. The principle of acting upon the views of men of reason, except in case they contradict Islam, in which case, it is obligatory to avoid contradicting Islam.

21. Whatever is needed by the legal course of individual life, the responsibility of procuring it lies upon the shoulder of the individual if he is capable, and in case he is incapable, it is a collective responsibility.

22. Whatever is needed by the system of social life, it is *wājib kifā'i*¹ to procure it and in case only some individuals can procure it, it becomes *wājib 'aynī* (personal obligation).

23. The principle of the absence of superiority of one person over another except for a reason, which is proven, like the superiority of the guardian over the minor.

24. The guardian (*walī*) Imām is he who has no guardian:

¹. *Wājib kifā'i*: the obligation which is on every member of the community as long as it is unfulfilled, but as soon as a person or some persons have fulfilled it, it is no longer an obligation on those who have not fulfilled it. [Trans.]

الإمام ولي من لا ولية له.

25. The actions done by a person prior to his becoming Muslim has no retroactive effect: “*Islam loves what comes before it.*”

الإسلام يحب ما قبله.

26. Acting upon legitimate conditions is obligatory: “Muslims are associated with their conditions except that which contradicts the Book (Qur’ān) or the Sunnah.”

ال المسلمين عند شروطهم إلا ما خالف الكتاب أو السنة.

27. In determining the cases of ambiguity when there is no proof of determining any of them, the principle of casting lots (*qur‘ah*) can be used: “*Casting lots pertains to every problematic matter.*”

القرعة على كل أمر مشكل.

28. *Istiṣḥāb* or the principle of permanence of every ruling or subject which has existed before and its present existence is doubtful.

29. The principle of permissibility of things: “All things are pure even if there is prohibition in them.”

كل شيء مطلق حتى يرد فيه أنتهى.

30. The principle of immunity for non-Muslims (*Ahl al-Dhimmah*).¹

31. Ignorance suspends a ruling except in case of ignorance by shortcoming: “*My community is beyond what it does not know.*”

رُفع عن أمي ما لا يعلمون.

32. Compulsion and coercion suspend a ruling: “*My community is beyond... what is imposed upon it.*”

رُفع عن أمي... وما استكرهوا عليه.

33. Constraint does not annul transactions although the transaction of constrained individuals is imposed.

34. In actions whose cause totally brings about their actualization and the person that supervises their performance as the agent, the discretion is with

¹ *Ahl al-Dhimmah*: non-Muslim citizens of the Islamic state, whose rights and obligations are contractually stipulated. [Trans.]

the cause, and the actions shall be attributed to the cause:

العمل للسبب عدد ما كان ألياً سبباً كالآلة الحضنة.

35. If acting upon a religious ruling brings about harm on the life, property and honor of a person at the hands of followers of another belief, acting upon that ruling is suspended under the necessity of dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) and behaving contrary to it is obligatory except in case of killing somebody, because even motivated by *taqiyyah*, one is not allowed to kill someone else:

﴿مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أَكْرَهَ رُوْلَهُ مُطْمِئِنٌ بِإِيمَانِهِ﴾

*“Whoever renounces faith in Allah after [affirming] his faith—
except someone who is compelled while his heart is at rest in
faith...”¹*

﴿إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا مِنْهُمْ لُثَّةٌ﴾

“...except when you are wary of them out of caution.”²

36. The principle of the absence of imposition of a ruling and duty on others except in cases like [loud] recitation in congregational prayers done by the *imām* on behalf of his followers (*ma'munīn*):

الأصل عدم تحمل الإنسان عن غيره إلا موارد الدليل عليه.

37. If the reason behind a ruling has many components, all those components are integral parts of the reason. So, negation of one of them leads to negation of the reason, and therefore the supposed ruling shall be negated:

كلّ ما كانت أعلمة مركبةً توقيف الحكم على إجتماع جميع أجزائها.

38. The rule of justice: this rule is one of the most fundamental rules of jurisprudence in all its sections.

39. A ruling's inclusion of a case which has not been a subject of the ruling but later becomes a subject of it; for example, when a person endows something for the poor and later he becomes poor, he will also be entitled to the endowed item:

قد يثبت ضمناً ما لم يثبت أصلاً.

40. Those who are the nearest to a person take precedence in acquiring

¹ *Sūrat al-Nahl* 16:106.

² *Sūrat āl 'Imrān* 3:28.

anything good from him as well as in incurring any harm from him over those who are distant from him; for example, the issue of inheritance and blood-money. This law is the most fundamental element of human interrelationship which cures man's illness of alienation from one another as well as alienation from his own self:

الأقربون أحق بالمعروف والأقرب يمنع البعد.

41. The criterion for the value of action lies in the intention:

لكل امرئٍ ما نوىٌ.

"Every man shall have what he intended."

إِنَّمَا الْأَعْمَالَ بِالنِّيَاتِ.

"Indeed actions are [judged] by the intentions."

البيّنة روح العمل.

"Intention is the spirit of action."

42. In the case of a particular or general ruling supported by a particular reason, this ruling is repelled by the absence of the reason behind it:

الحكمُ الخاصُّ والعامُ المستندُ إلى السببِ المعينِ ينتفي بِانتفاءِ السببِ.

43. Writing a will (*wasiyah*) is the right of every Muslim:

﴿كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِن تَرَكَ خَيْرًا لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَفَّاً عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ﴾

"Prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you and he leaves behind any property, is that he make a bequest for his parents and relatives, in an honorable manner—an obligation on the God-wary."¹

44. He who is more meritorious is more deserving than others to acquire a thing:

من سبق إلى شيء لم يسبق عليه أحد قبله فهو أولى به.

45. The statement of a person which has no way of proving except himself is a proof, unless he is accused of lying: "*The saying of one who is unknown before, except as an accused, must be heard.*"

يجب سماع قول من لا يعلم إلا من قبله إلا أن يكون متهمًا.

¹. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:180.

46. If the suspension of the impermissibility of a ruling depends on the existence of a condition or cause, it is necessary to present the said condition or cause to give a ruling on its permissibility.

47. If the suspension of an obligatory ruling depends on a condition or cause, one must present the said condition or cause in order to give ruling on the permissibility of its suspension.

48. A useful work is valuable and its value must not be taken away from it:

العمل الخصم لا يكون ضائعاً.

49. The real value of a work must always be taken into account:

﴿وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا أَنَّ النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَ هُمْ﴾

“And do not cheat the people of their goods.”¹

50. The child for a legal wife serves as the stone of penalty for the adulterer: “*The child is for the bed while the adulterer is for the stone.*”

الولد للفراش وللعاهر الحجر.

51. It is unlawful (*harām*) to consume property wrongfully:

﴿وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بِيَسْكُنْ بِالْبَطْلِ﴾

“Do not eat up your wealth among yourselves wrongfully.”²

52. Maturity, reason and physical strength are among the general conditions for the assumption of responsibility and commitment:

﴿مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ حَرَجٍ﴾

“*Allah does not desire to put you to hardship.*”³

رفع القلم عن الصبي والجنون.

“*The pen is lifted for the minor and the crazy.*”

الذمة للمكلف.

“*Disclosure is for the obliged person (mukallaf).*”

53. The impermissibility of imitation (*taqlīd*) in matters of the principles of beliefs and all rational cases on which reason rules: “*The principles of belief*

¹ *Sūrat al-A'rāf* 7:85.

² *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:188.

³ *Sūrat al-Mā'idah* 5:6.

are by discernment and inference and not by imitation.”

أصول العقائد بالنظر والإستدلال لا بالتقليد.

54. The principle of the sufficiency of a solitary report (*khabar wāhid*) as proof (*ḥujjah*) on certain subjects as substantiated by proofs such as the meaning of the Qur’ānic verse, “*O you who have faith! If a profligate [person] should bring you some news, verify it, lest you should visit [harm] on some people out of ignorance, and then become regretful for what you have done,*”¹ and the views of men of reason.

55. Determining the ways of discharging responsibilities and proving rulings on position (*wad’iyyah*) depend on reason and the men of reason:

تعيين طرق امتثال التكاليف والأحكام الوضعية موكول إلى العقل والعلماء.

56. Collation of general concepts and propositions with their cases is rational.

57. Anyone who benefits from something shall also incur the harm it may bring:

من له الغنم فله الغرم.

58. Anything which is permissible to be loaned shall also be permissible to be rented:

كلّ ما يصح قرضه تصح إجارته.

59. That which is religiously impossible is also most likely rationally impossible:

الممتنع شرعاً ممتنع عقلاً.

60. That which may possibly be ignored in secondary matters cannot be ignored in matters of principles. For instance, it is invalid to give as endowment that which does not exist but it is valid to give as endowment what is nonexistent but comes into existence later:

يغتفر في التوابع ما لا يغتفر في غيرها.

61. It is common for a divorcee (*mutlaq*) to adopt ‘single’ [status] (*fard*) provided that this adoption is not primary:

المطلق ينصرف إلى الفرد الشائع.

¹. *Sūrat al-Hujurāt* 49:6.

62. An opinion cannot be attributed to someone silent although he can speak for himself, unless there are pieces of evidence proving or disproving it: “*A saying cannot be attributed to the silent.*”

لا ينسب لساكتٍ قول.

63. It is invalid to delay a statement from the time of need [for it]:

لا يصح تأخير البيان عن وقت الحاجة.

64. That which is optionally outside choice has no contradiction with freewill and responsibility: “*Contrary to the choice does not contradict the choice.*”

المناف للإختيار لا ينافي الإختيار.

65. That which is established in the past as righteous practice and there is no proof to the contrary, shall remain as such:

القديم يترك على قدمه يا مالك، ولا تنقض سنة صالحة عمل بما صدور هذه الأمة.
ولا تنقض اليقين بالشك.

“*And do not turn certainty into doubt.*”

66. Acknowledgment of the position of a composition shall be deemed composition:

الإقرار في موضع الإنشاء إنشاء.

67. A principle serves as the proof as long as there is no [contrary] proof: “*The principle is a proof where there is no proof.*”

الأصل دليل حيث لا دليل.

68. Relying and acting upon a statement is better than overlooking and neglecting the same:

إنما الكلام أولى من إهماله.

69. Permission concerning a thing means permission concerning its axiomatic properties:

الإذن في الشيء إذن في لوازمه اليسنة.

70. As there is no more obstruction, prohibition takes effect:

إذا زال المانع عاد الممنوع.

71. Reconciliation is the mother of all transactions:

الصلح سيد المعاملات.

72. Where two proofs or rulings are contradictory, both of them are suspended:

إذا زال المانع عاد الممنوع.

73. Reconciliation of two contraries or contradictories to the extent possible is better than neglecting them both:

الجمع مهمماً أمكن أولى من الطرح.

74. As an intelligible probability appears, any [contrary] inference is invalid:

إذا جاء الإحتمال بطل الاستدلال.

75. The owner's possession of a property which is transferred from him to another person through a transaction or any other way is annulled, and possession of a property which is transferred to him is the effect of and permitted by the transaction:

التصرف فيما أنتقل عنه فسخ وفيما أنتقل إليه إجازة وانفاذ.

76. Commitment to a thing means commitment to its requisites:

الألتزام بالشيء الألتزام بلازمته.

77. Suspension of a ruling on a quality (*wasf*) proves the causality of the quality for the ruling:

تعليق الحكم بالوصف مشعر بالعلية.

78. In case of contradiction between quality (*wasf*) and allusion (*ishārah*), the latter shall prevail provided that the alluded peculiarities and qualities are clear:

في تعارض الوصف والإشارة تقدم الاشارة بشرط أن يكون مخصوصات الموضوع وأوصافها واضحة.

79. Incapability to perform religious duties leads to suspension [of the obligation to perform them]:

﴿فَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَى مِيسَرَةٍ﴾.

Examples of Particular Rules

1. An Example of Judicial Principles and Rules

1. Clear evidence lies on the plaintiff while taking oath lies on the accused:

البيئة على من ادعى واليمين على من انكر.

2. Confession of the sound-minded against himself is permissible:

إقرار العقلاء على أنفسهم جائز.

3. Everyone has the authority to confess about anything he owns. From one perspective, this rule is one of the forms of the above rule:

من ملك شيئاً ملک الإقرار به.

4. Confession after denial is not valid:

لا يصح الإنكار بعد الإقرار.

5. Giving of testimony is obligatory and concealment of the same is forbidden:

﴿وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا﴾

6. Between acquitting a wrongdoer and convicting an innocent, the first takes precedence.

7. To punish justly the religious offenders and criminals while taking into account the goals of ‘rational life’, is permissible.

2. Example of the Principles and Rules of Retaliation, Penal Law and Fines

1. No blood of any Muslim (according to Qur’ānic verses, traditions and dictate of reason) and noble person shall be shed:

لا يطلّ دم امرء مسلم.

“*The blood of a Muslim shall not be overlooked.*”

﴿وَمَنْ يَغْتَلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَمَمًّا فَجَرَأُوهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا﴾

“*And whoever kills a believer intentionally, his punishment is hell; he shall abide in it.*”

﴿مَنْ أَجْلَ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اللَّهُ مَنْ قَلَّ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَانَمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَانَمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا﴾

“*That is why We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever takes a life, without [its being guilty of] manslaughter or corruption on the earth, is as though he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves a life is as though he had saved all mankind.*”¹

¹. *Sūrat al-Mā’idah* 5:32.

2. *Hudūd*¹ shall be aborted by mere doubt:

ثُدِّرًا الحدود بالشبهات.

3. In case of unintended murder, it is incumbent upon the sound-minded [offender] to pay blood-money:

الدية في القتل الخطأ على العاقلة.

4. In case of premeditated murder, the penalty is one of the three, viz. *qisāṣ*,² [giving of] blood-money (*dīyah*), or pardon ('*afw*):³

في القتل العمد أحد الأمور الثلاثة، القصاص أو الدية أو العفو.

4. If the repayment or fine, or its value is not stated in the religious texts, the judge has to determine it.

5. The burden of punishment is to be shouldered individually. This does not contradict the giving of blood money by someone with a sound mind in case of unintended murder.

6. In case of ambiguity (*lawth*), swearing has been prescribed. *Lawth* means the existence of a prior indication or indications that there is a proof that the

¹. *Hudūd* (literally means boundaries or limits) in the Islamic law is generally applied to penal law for punishments prescribed for particular crimes whose extent is determined by law. [Trans.]

². *Qisāṣ* (literally means retribution or retaliation) in the Islamic jurisprudence is to be executed against a criminal, according to the legal decree, who has committed crimes such as murder, amputation of a body limb, or laceration and beating in case the victim or his guardians are seeking retribution in lieu of receiving fine or blood money. [Trans.]

³. It can be said that one of the most formidable rational cases in Islamic jurisprudence is the penalty for premeditated murder and one of its three forms is *qisāṣ*. Just as God has mentioned a noble way, “*There is life for you in retribution, O you who possess intellects! Maybe you will be God-wary!*” (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:179), if the members of society clearly know that in case of committing murder, the murderer shall also be executed, by endangering his life as well the murderer will understand better the value and greatness of human life. That some narrow-minded individuals today consider the penalty of retaliation improper, and imitating the views of some Westerners, say that as one person is killed there is no point of killing another person, shows that they do not understand the important deterrent effect of *qisāṣ* in preventing mass murder or suicide. When people think that killing an innocent person is also one of those crimes beyond reparation by society, the value of life is underrated to that extent. Is one’s soul like a commodity that can be compensated by some money and few days of imprisonment?

murdered person has been killed by the defendant or defendants.

Qasāmah refers to oaths taken by the plaintiffs—50 oaths in case of premeditated murder and 25 oaths in case of unintentional murder; otherwise, it is the case of *lawth* according to the primary principle, “*Clear evidence lies on the plaintiff while taking oath lies on the accused.*” *Qasāmah* is done in this manner: initially, the accused will be requested to bring evidence and if he fails, it is the turn of the victim’s relatives to undergo *qasāmah*.

3. Examples of Legal Principles and Rules

1. Contracts and the like depend on the intention of the contracting parties:

العقود وما يشابها (وما قام مقامها) تتبع القصود.

2. Dissolution of contracts pertains to the components of the contracts’ subject in case the dissolution is possible.

3. To act upon every legitimate condition is obligatory:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ﴾

“*O you who have faith! Keep your agreements.*”¹

ال المسلمين عند شروطهم إلا ما خالف الكتاب أو السنة.

“*The Muslims are attached to their terms except whatever goes against the Book (Qur’ān) or the Sunnah.*”

4. A condition which goes against the intent of the contract renders this contract invalid:

كل عقد شرط فيه خلاف ما يقتضيه فهو باطل.

5. A crooked condition does not invalidate the whole contract:

الشرط الفاسد لا يفسد العقود.

6. If it is impossible to abide by the meaning of any contract it is invalid:

كل عقد يتعذر الوفاء فهو عبض منه باطل.

7. The provision in contracts is necessary.

8. Like his life, man’s property is respected:

حرمة ماله كحرمة دمه.

¹. *Sūrat al-Mā’idah* 5:1.

9. Reconciliation is permissible and predominant.

“And settle your differences.”¹

“Reconciliation between Muslims is permissible except in making lawful unlawful and unlawful lawful.”²

“Reconciliation between people is permissible.”³

10. The one who is deceived by someone should refer to the one who has deceived him:

المغورو يرجع إلى من غرّه.

11. Guarantee transfers the liability for the amount due from the debtor to the guarantor:

الضامن ناقل.

“The guarantor is a carrier of burden.”

12. Loss of trust of the guarantor through his infringement or falling below the conditions set for a guarantor:

ليس على المؤمن ضمان.

13. Whoever spends another person's property becomes its guarantor:

من أتلف مال الغير فهو له ضامن.

14. In loan there is no guarantor except loan of gold and silver, or through his infringement or falling below the conditions set for a guarantor.

15. In a wholesome Islamic society, possession of a property by means of control over it is a sign of ownership:

لولا اليد لما قام للمسلمين سوق.

16. Anyone who takes something from another person (not through any dealing or as a trust or loan) is the guarantor of it until he returns it to the owner:

على اليد ما أخذت حتى يؤدّى.

17. The Muslims' market is proof (*hujjah*) (in every society in which Islamic

¹ *Sūrat al-Anfāl* 8:1.

² *Wasā'il al-Shī'ah*, “Kitāb al-Ṣulh,” section (*bāb*) 3.

³ *Ibid.*

laws are acted upon or at least most people follow Islamic laws, the rule in that society is the primacy of sayings, acts and intentions):

لَوْ لَمْ يَجِدْ هَذَا لَمْ قَامْ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ سُوقٌ.

18. Every debt (*dayn*) is instantaneous (and must be given without any delay) except in particular cases discussed in jurisprudence:

كُلَّ دِينٍ حَالَ إِلَّا فِي مَوَارِدٍ يَبْحَثُ عَنْهَا فِي الْفَقْهِ.

19. Debt must absolutely be given:

الْدِينُ مَقْضَىٰ.

20. The necessity of giving due respite in paying debt:

﴿فَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَظِرْأَةً إِلَىٰ مِيسَرَةٍ﴾

21. The guarantor must be able to do his or her function:

الرَّعِيمُ غَارِمٌ.

22. Just as every item which is a subject of transaction and must be guaranteed in case of its validity, that which invalidates the transaction must also have a guarantor:

مَا يَضْمَنْ بِصَحِيحِهِ يَضْمَنْ بِفَاسِدِهِ.

23. Any item which has an equivalent can be guaranteed by its equivalent and any item which has no equivalent, its price must be given:

الْمُشَابِهُ يَضْمَنُ بِالْمُشَابِهِ، وَالْقِيمِيُّ يَضْمَنُ بِالْقِيمِيِّ.

24. In case of death or extinction of the subject of guarantee, the basis of payment is the current value:

مَنَافِعُ الْأَمْوَالِ تَضْمَنْ بِالْفَوْتِ أَوْ بِالْتَّفَوِيتِ الْمُعْتَبَرُ فِي الْضَّمَانِ يَوْمَ التَّلْفِ.

25. The free can neither be bought nor sold:

الْحَرَّ لَا يَبْاعُ.

26. Anyone who possesses a property through negotiations becomes its owner:

مَنْ حَازَ مَلْكًا.

27. Anyone who cultivates a barren land becomes its owner:

مَنْ أَحْبَأَ أَرْضًا مَيْتَةً فَهِيَ لَهُ.

28. The people are absolutely free to spend their properties:

الناس مسلطون على أموالهم.

29. Waiving of rights in relation to a property forfeits one's ownership of it.

30. The private property is customarily at the disposal of the owner:

من ملك شيئاً من الأرض ملك قراره في حريمه.

31. The principle is that a person cannot own anything by force except by inheritance and testament (*waṣīyyah*):

لا يدخل في ملك إنسان شيء قهراً إلا الإرث والوصية للحمل.

32. The lack of any objective or expedient transaction except on the part of the owner or anyone who is his equivalent:

لا يقع عقد على عين أو مفعة إلا من مالك أو بحكمه.

33. Any sold item which perished before being possessed by the buyer is considered still owned by the seller:

كلّ مبيع تلف قبل قبضه فهو من مال مبيعه.

34. In any case selling and buying is valid, mortgage is also valid:

كلما صاح بيعه صاح رهنـه.

35. Mortgaging is conditioned by receipt:

لا رهن إلا مقبضاً.

36. The usurper must be punished severely except in times of famine and emergency:

الغاصب يؤخذ بأشـق الأحوال إلا في قحط أو خـمـصـة.

37. Faithlessness (*kufr*) and committing murder deprives one of inheritance:

الكفر والقتل يمنعان الإرث.

38. The need for observing envy in obsolete things.

39. Anyone who can directly interfere in a matter can take a proxy in relation to it:

كلّ من صاح منه المباشر صاح منه التوكيل.

40. Any endowment (*waqf*) must be done according to the intention and objective of the endower:

الوقوف على حسب ما يوقفها أهلها.

41. Anyone who owns an item also owns the benefits to be taken from it:
من ملك شيئاً ملك منافعه.

42. If one of two or some business partners wants to sell his share from a shared property, any partner or partners take priority in buying it:
حق الشفعة.

43. In writing contracts, the weaker party is supposed to write and have a copy of the contract because there is a stronger possibility of ambiguity and bullying on the part of the stronger party. (Obviously, this is not a general principle or rule, but only applicable in case of removing any possible injustice to be done against the weak.)

44. Guarantee can be canceled by permission:

الضمان يسقط بالإذن.

45. In cases of the possibility of rejection, the one who has the right to do so does not reject it, it shall be regarded as approval:

عدم الرد يكفي في الإمضاء.

46. Deprivation of a gain which a person may acquire naturally or legally shall be regarded as a loss:

عدم الفع الذي يقتضيه القانون ضرر.

By examining closely the jurisprudential principles and rules, the following two very important conclusions can be drawn:

First conclusion: Islamic jurisprudence has not enacted artificial, unrealistic and irrational limits and frameworks. In other words, Islamic jurisprudence is an open system because every principle or rule it has prescribed for individual and social life is harmonious with the dynamic nature of human life. Moreover, in view of mankind's movement toward rational life which means natural life, life based on clear evidence and guidance toward the life which is linked with God, the Owner of life and death, these very principles and rules are driving forces toward the abovementioned life.

Second conclusion: By putting human life in the spotlight, the said jurisprudential principles and rules, backed by sublime human morality, make Islamic jurisprudence possess both merits of being a 'forerunner' and

an ‘adherent’. It is a ‘forerunner’ in the sense that it guarantees inalterable physical and spiritual needs of human life. It is an ‘adherent’ in the sense that it totally acknowledges the open nature of life’s dimensions with the emergence of new subjects and phenomena in relation to nature as well as the introduction of technology. It does not stand in the way of its expansion and diversity, except in cases that disturb dynamic and purposeful human life. For example, producing narcotic drugs, providing the means to incite carnal passions and paving the way for the moral corruption of society that leads to nothing but the feeling of futility in life.

Here, we have no option but to mention a very important point and that is, purely ‘adherent’ laws that have nothing to do with the constructive morality of rational life only regulate the human inclinations for the benefit of collective life (i.e. life devoid of disturbance to fellow human beings). In reality, this is to regulate human beings, unaware of the purposeful life. In order to clarify these two conclusions, we have no option but to examine the qualitative nature of Islamic legal and jurisprudential system in terms of its openness or rigidity.

Openness or Rigidity of the Islamic Legal and Jurisprudential System

While being axiomatic,¹ the Islamic jurisprudential system is totally open—not rigid—in the realm of purely human dimensions and needs.

Since the early twentieth century, some ignorant individuals created the false impression, without any scientific or philosophical footing, that the scope of Islamic laws and jurisprudence is limited and thus, it cannot be responsive to all human predicaments.

The intrinsic power of life has set this phenomenon (life) in motion, and expanded it in the vast realm of matter and motion with such a systematic rule of law, that it never became stagnant or paused along the way. It is also clear that human life, like those of animals, has also passed through the same regulated stages and reached the present state.

From the scientific and philosophical perspective, one cannot find even a single instance in which the phenomenon of life—be it in human, animal or plant kingdom—has ever gone against the law of nature. In other words, given their legal constraints, the components of nature and the laws

¹. Axiomatic in the sense of having principles and bases.

governing them are currently in motion in a ‘systematic’ manner, as described today. Meanwhile, in this arena of quest of the living and lifeless worlds, the most powerful source of life is that of the human being. By means of the wonderful brain, it is always moving from one state to another. There is no doubt at all that like the phenomenon of life, man, in whatever natural and social state (political, religious, moral, legal, cultural, and historical) he may be, is subject to innumerable laws.

From this observable state of affairs, we arrive at the definite conclusion that by having intrinsic active power and unlimited potential, man always moves through the highly systematic force that transforms the natural and conventional systems (in which he lives). Yes, had it not been for this sublime and transformative force, he would certainly have been extinguished within the complex systems hundreds, nay thousands, of centuries ago. While passing through the obstacles of the closed systems of nature and aspects of life, man preserves the basic principles of its identity.

His inalterable needs in the four types of relationship (man’s relationship with himself, God, the universe, and his fellow human beings) do not undergo any fundamental change. That which changes is the emergence of secondary and less important needs, or the artificial needs that are imposed by elements outside the ‘rational human life’ into the realm of collective human life.

Chapter 3

Questions and Answers on the Scope of Religion

Question 1

Is the model of living presented to us by these sciences or branches of knowledge not the same as the one presented to us by Islamic jurisprudence?

Answer: If ‘model’ here means that jurisprudence provides a pattern for “a justifiable life along the path of a lofty goal,” then it is obvious that the answer is in the affirmative. We read in the Qur’ān, thus:

﴿وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتُكَوِّنُوا شُهَدَاءَ﴾

“Thus We have made you a middle nation that you may be witnesses to the people, and that the Apostle may be a witness to you.”¹

﴿وَجَاهَدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جَهَادِهِ هُوَ اجْبَارُكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ مِّلَةً أَيْسِكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَفِي هَذَا لَيْكُونَ الرَّوْسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ﴾

“And wage jihād for the sake of Allah, a jihād which is worthy of Him. He has chosen you and has not placed for you any obstacle in the religion, the faith of your father, Abraham. He named you ‘Muslims’ before, and in this, so that the Apostle may be a witness to you, and that you may be witnesses to mankind.”²

Meanwhile, in actuality, the outstanding pious personalities who acquired sublime principles of humanity and were introduced in history by Islam with such jurisprudence and human rights can definitely be the best model and criterion for a ‘rational life’.

A famous materialist, Shibli Shamil, says, “The leader, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the great of the great, is a unique exemplar. Neither has the East nor the West, yesterday or today, ever seen a copy of this original.” Can any sensible person ever think that a time or situation would come in human life in which ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) would not be the best model for the people’s rational life at that time and condition?

¹ *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:143.

² *Sūrat al-Hajj* 22:78.

Granted that sublime human principles and excellent morality will remain the same, in which period or situation would personalities like Salmān al-Fārsī, Abū Dharr al-Ghiffārī, Mālik al-Ashtar, ‘Ammār ibn Yāsīr, Miqdād ibn Aswad, Uways al-Qarnī, Ibn al-Tayhān, Kumayl ibn Ziyād al-Nakha’ī, and hundreds of others, not be able to live?

When sublime human principles are removed from the scene, and human society turns into a factory of unconscious, helpless screws, nuts and bolts, there will be no room for Abraham, the Friend, Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd Allāh, Mūsā ibn ‘Imrān, ‘Isā ibn Maryam, ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib (*‘a*), and those excellent men and women who attained a station within the Axis of Perfection.

Obviously, inventions can help a lot in discovering the things beneficial to man when advancing human identity in the four types of relationship and not promoting narcissism, hedonism and hegemony. A jurisprudential rule states: Cooperating to provide whatever is needed in the system of a wholesome social life is a collective responsibility (*wājib kifā’ī*); in case its realization requires the efforts of some individuals, it is a personal obligation (*wājib ‘aynī*) for each one of them.

Two extremely important factors are necessary for the encouragement of innovating and acquiring further knowledge about the universe:

First factor: Qur’ānic verses, authentic traditions and the dictate of reason make up this factor. This is especially so if we consider the authentic traditions which highlight the necessity of reflecting on our experience to unravel new realities. According to the Commander of the Faithful ‘Alī (*‘a*)

وفي التجارب علم مستأنف.

“Through experiences (*experiments*), [new horizons of] knowledge shall be acquired.”¹

Second factor: A close examination of scientific methods and incessant discoveries by Muslims, from the latter part of the second century up to the middle of the fifth century AH, at the time of the dark Middle Ages in the West.

¹. The injunction to conduct experiment in discovering realities can be seen in more than 10 authentic traditions.

Question 2

Do all religious values originate from jurisprudence, or does ethics play a role as well?

Question 3

Can jurisprudence and religion assume the responsibility of managing society, or should human knowledge take control of this management?

Answer: Since the two questions above deal with a single issue, we shall address them together. The most fundamental factor giving rise to such questions is the lack of understanding the religion or jurisprudence of Islam. As such, although the meaning of jurisprudence has been clarified in our previous discourses, here we shall briefly define jurisprudence again in its general sense. Jurisprudence means knowledge of the laws pertaining to all human actions and avoidances in both the physical and spiritual realms, in connection with God, as basically substantiated by the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, consensus and reason. These proofs bespeak of what is good and evil for the 'rational life' without which it is impossible to achieve otherworldly success. So, in reality, all knowledge—be it physical or mental, natural or conventional, or ideological is encompassed by God's all-embracing law. Rūmī used the term "jurisprudence of the Sublime God" (fiqh Allāh al-akbar) in the first book of Mathnawī indicating the vastness of the scope of jurisprudence, for he expressed therein his ideas while seriously keeping in view the exegeses of Qur'ānic verses. The late Sabziwārī says that the Mathnawī embarks on giving a commentary of the content of the Qur'ān and around 600 moral, mystical and psychological traditions, as well as the basic principles of knowledge and learning in the realm of "what it is" and "what ought to be".

By closely examining the dimensions of the laws of Islam, it can be proved that, all actions and aspects of man's rational life in the individual and social domains which contribute to his worldly and otherworldly felicity are encompassed by jurisprudence in its true sense, and not only limited to dealing with man's personal relationship with God, i.e. acts of worship ('ibādāt).

Therefore, Islamic jurisprudence consists of the following sections:

1. Jurisprudence on the acts of worship;
2. Jurisprudence on personal conditions;

3. Jurisprudence on business transactions, contracts and obligations;
4. Moral jurisprudence;
5. Mystical jurisprudence;
6. Political jurisprudence;
7. Technological jurisprudence;
8. Jurisprudence on international relations;
9. Cultural jurisprudence;
10. Jurisprudence on management;
11. Jurisprudence of *jihād* and defense;
12. Jurisprudence on sciences;
13. Jurisprudence on discoveries;
14. Jurisprudence on rights;
15. Judicial jurisprudence;
16. Jurisprudence on resistance against oppression and corruption;
17. Jurisprudence on resistance against inappropriate practices;
18. Jurisprudence on encouraging and enjoining what is appropriate;
19. Jurisprudence on prospective trends; and
20. Jurisprudence on the information received about whatever transpires in the world.

In order to prove the justifiability of this categorization, it is essential to consider the following proofs:

First proof: “*I was not sent but to perfect excellent morality.*” This tradition has been narrated in numerous instances from the Holy Prophet (ṣ). This tradition presents the purpose behind the mission of the Holy Prophet (ṣ) as perfection and completion of morality and self-refinement of the people. Therefore, morality is a very important segment of the prophets’ mission, which is within the scope of jurisprudence in its general sense.

Second proof: In numerous verses, the Noble Qur’ān regarded “*teaching the Book and wisdom*” as the purpose of the mission of the Holy

Prophet (ṣ):

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَأْتِيهِ وَبِرُّكَيْهِمْ وَيَعْلَمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ﴾
 “It is He who sent to the unlettered [people] an apostle from among themselves, to recite to them His signs, to purify them, and to teach them the Book and wisdom.”¹

Clearly, the contents of the Divine Book and meaning of wisdom undertake organizing the welfare of man’s rational life, and not only some acts of worship and their quantitative and qualitative features.

Third proof: In the first sermon of *Nahj al-Balāghah*, the Commander of the Faithful (‘a) thus says about the prophets’ mission:

وَوَاتَرَ اللَّهُمَّ أَنْبِياءَهُ، لِيُسْتَأْدُوهُمْ بِمِنَافِقِ فَطْرَتِهِ، وَيُدَكِّرُوهُمْ مَنْسَيَ نَعْمَانِي، وَيَجْعَلُوْهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ بِالْتَّبَلِغِ،
 وَيُشْرِرُوا لَهُمْ دَفَائِنَ الْأَعْقُولِ، وَبُرُوْهُمْ آيَاتِ الْمُقْدَرَةِ. مِنْ سَقَفَ فَوْقَهُمْ مَرْفُوعٌ، وَمَهَادِ تَحْتَهُمْ
 مَوْضُوعٌ، وَمَعَايِشَ شَحِيْهِمْ.

“Then Allah sent His Messengers toward them to make them fulfill the pledges of His creation, to recall His bounties, to exhort them by preaching, to unveil before them the hidden virtues of wisdom, and show them the signs of His Omnipotence; namely, the sky, which is raised over them, the earth, that is placed beneath them, and the means of living, that sustains them.”²

The correct meaning of Islamic jurisprudence is given here. Of course, to identify the subjects, relations and ways of conforming subjects to particular cases in various sections of jurisprudence is the responsibility of pious authorities and experts. After them [in this responsibility] are the jurisprudents who engage in deducing laws and rulings from the sources of jurisprudence.

Question 4

Are religion and jurisprudence perfect, and is only ones understanding of them imperfect?

Answer: This question resembles this one: Is the universe a systematic manufactory, and only our scientific and philosophical perceptions of it are defective?

¹ *Sūrat al-Jumu‘ah* 62:2.

² *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 1.

Yes, just as the universe is not identical with our perception of it, it is clear that religion and jurisprudence are not identical with our perception or understanding of them. But there is one thing that should not be forgotten and that is, since perfection is laden with positive value and imperfection (defect) with negative value, academically it seems more appropriate and correct to use the word ‘limitation’ or ‘relativity’ with respect to our perceptions of religion and jurisprudence. This is because, of the short span of human life, and the limitations of scientific means at the disposal of man. This limitation and relativity has been accepted in all branches of knowledge, including philosophy and even mysticism (*'irfān'*). This expression is like a common slogan written in large letters and displayed at the façade of a magnificent palace: “Everything is known to everyone while everyone is yet to be born.” (That is, so much knowledge and learning has been entrusted by the past generation to the future generation.) Mawlānā (Rūmī) says,

تا به قرنی بعد ما آبی رسد	هین بگو که ناطقه جو می‌کند
لیک گفت سالفان یاری بود	گرچه هر قرنی سخن آری بود

Come, speak [O my soul]! For the Logos is digging a channel, to the end that some water may reach a generation after us.

Although [in] every generation there is one who brings the word [of God], yet the sayings of them that have gone before are helpful.¹

The Divine Revelation, through the great prophets, has presented to mankind an overview of the principles of the universe and the bases of jurisprudence, while scientific discoveries make clear the levels, dimensions and aspects of the insignificant corner of the universe we are located in. As acknowledged by scientists, compared with what is unknown to us, what we know of the universe is insignificant. Yet, all the scientists and philosophers still undertake activities, knowing well that the universe is not identical with what is known about it, and that they will never succeed in knowing all about it. They are still so busy working in their respective fields that it is as if they can see the entire universe within the confines of their respective fields!

¹. Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 3, lines 2537-2538, p. 281. [Trans.]

The factors that stand in the way of knowing all dimensions of all components of the entire universe are as follows:

1. The use of sensory perceptions while taking into account their structural limitations, such as eyes and ears;
2. Interference of intrinsic features of the means and tools for expanding knowledge; for example, telescopes, microscopes and other equipments and tools;
3. Specific aim in knowing things limits man's perspective on the universe;
4. Premeditated general principles, which consciously or unconsciously foster and justify acquired pieces of knowledge;
5. Premeditated specific principles influence man's special relationships in choosing goals and means of knowledge.

In seeking the help of religious revelation, which also formally recognizes scientific recognition, there is an extreme tranquility not generated by any other knowledge and action. In usual scientific recognition of the universe, human beings acquire two things: (1) some components of the universe for the needs of physical life, and (2) delight or stupefaction with such limited recognition with some levels and components of the universe, which can never reach the tranquility-giving absolute degree.

Question 5

Is it jurisprudence that ‘seizes’ (*qabḍ*), ‘expands’ (*bast*) and gives form to life, or is it the form of life that ‘seizes’ and ‘expands’ jurisprudence (and schools of law)?

Answer: In view of discussions in some contemporary writings, it means presenting changes in the general sense, and not *qabḍ* and *bast* in the special sense of the terms. The terms *qabḍ* and *bast* were found for the first time in a tradition by Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a). The tradition is as follows: Yūnus ibn 'Abd al-Rahmān narrates on the authority of Ḥamzah ibn Muḥammad al-Tayyār that Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) said: “There is no *qabḍ* or *bast* except in what God, the Exalted, has willed, predestined and inflicted.”¹

In another tradition, Faḍālah ibn Ayyūb narrates on the authority of Ḥamzah ibn Muḥammad al-Tayyār that Imām al-Ṣādiq ('a) said: “There is nothing in

¹. *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, vol. 1, p. 152.

the commandments and prohibitions of God in which there is *qabd* and *bast* except in which God, the Exalted and Glorious inflicts a decree (as a trial).”¹

The first tradition has not determined a specific subject for *qabd* and *bast*. As such, it can be said that it includes anything in which *qabd* and *bast* is possible. In the second tradition, the subject of *qabd* and *bast* has been specified and that is, the commandments and prohibitions (laws and duties) of God.

This tradition can be interpreted in two ways: matters from God that somehow pertain to man’s being—whether ontological matters (*umūr-e takwīnī*) such as, specific fashion of man’s creation and his relationship with the universe; or, legislative matters (*umūr-e tashrī’ī*), such as, the laws and duties prescribed by God. Whether in their state of *qabd* or *bast*, they are based upon Divine decree and will, as well as, a trial for His servants.

There are three possibilities about *qabd* and *bast*:

1. Brevity and elaboration;
2. Union and dissension;
3. Obstruction and adversity, and opening and welfare

The second way of interpreting the tradition is that there is no Divine commandment and prohibition in which there is brevity and elaboration, or obstruction and opening, except that, which God, the Blessed and Exalted, has set as a trial or test for His servants. In general, considering that the Divine commandments and prohibitions are also related to man’s life for perfection in whose substance and purport God has set a trial or decree for His servants. The meaning stated for the tradition has nothing to do with what can be seen in some contemporary writings.

Now, we shall embark on answering the question.

On one side is the advanced jurisprudence which, in activating the positive talents of human beings, prepares them to acquire its potential benefits, although there have been no changes and alterations in the realm of life due to the development and advancement in science, technology and communications. For example, the in-depth acquaintance with the Qur’ān of the great figures throughout the centuries and periods is indeed impossible

¹. *Ibid.*

for the common people. The inference of Qur'ānic verses of such men as Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Tūsī, Ibn Rushd,¹ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Ṣadr al-Mu'allihīn (Mullā Ṣadrā), and Mīr Dāmād can never be compared with that of common people. These great men played a vital role in founding useful knowledge in the present world. At the time when the informed scholars and jurisprudents of the past centuries were concerned with the rights of animals in jurisprudence, categorically mentioning them in books of jurisprudence like *Jawāhir al-Kalām*,² there had been no news about the advancement of science, technology and communications.³ During the third, fourth and a bit of the fifth century AH, Muslims took both the East and the West as the arena of their search, such that Oriental and Western historians—even those who did not believe in any religion—acknowledged that Muslim societies had been the forerunners in research, innovation and intellectual pursuits in the world. This activity of the Muslims emanated from within them as indicated in the book, *Sarguzasht-e Andīsheh*, for, although they examined and researched on Greek philosophy, in empirical sciences, they acquired great advancements without imitating and following other nations and societies. These became the foundations of important scientific and technological discoveries and exerted a far-reaching influence on the West. Therefore, ‘advanced’ religious jurisprudence played a vital role in the advancement of sciences, worldview, technology, and other principles of an advanced culture.

Meanwhile, the emergence of new issues and happenings can also contribute to the comparative development of jurisprudence and laws. The many books about recent issues which are currently written and in which principles, rules, explicit texts and ammendation of definite criteria are utilized, bear witness to this claim. So far, this is a trend, which no authority has even doubted.

¹. Abū 'l-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Rushd better known as Ibn Rushd, and in European literature as Averroes (1126-98): an Andalusian Muslim polymath; a master of Aristotelian philosophy, Islamic philosophy, Islamic theology, Mālikī law and jurisprudence, logic, psychology, politics, Arabic music theory, and the sciences of medicine, astronomy, geography, mathematics, physics, and celestial mechanics. [Trans.]

². *Jawāhir al-Kalām*: a treatise on various subjects of *fīqh* (jurisprudence) written by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan ibn Bāqir al-Najafi (d. Sha'bān 1266 AH), a great *faqīh* (jurisprudent) as well as a prominent *marja' al-taqlīd*. [Trans.]

³. In *Tarjumeh wa Tafsīr-e Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 12, pp. 158-164, the rights of animals are stated in 34 articles.

In view of what has been said, it can be concluded that ‘adherent’ jurisprudence and laws, ‘advanced’ jurisprudence and laws, and ‘adherent’ and ‘advanced’ jurisprudence and laws must be distinguished from one another:

1. In the ‘adherent’ jurisprudence and laws which claim that they are consistent with the desires, way of thinking and attitudes of the people, the answer is in the affirmative. The changes and modifications are caused by the changes in social relations and emergence of new phenomena and activities, provided that this claim [about changes] is exactly correct.
2. Meanwhile, the ‘advanced’ jurisprudence and laws maintain that the criterion for organizing social relations is the discretion of legal and juristic authorities because the desires, way of thinking and attitudes of the common people not supported by rational principles, cannot identify nor organize mankind’s material and spiritual felicity. For this reason, as long as changes in social relations do not duly affect the system of jurisprudence and laws as far as the views of authorities are concerned, they cannot have any effect in the transformation of the said system.

A close examination and survey of the jurisprudential and legal systems throughout history reveal that none of the two models (‘adherent’ and ‘advanced’) has ever existed in the absolute sense. No one doubts that after the Renaissance in the West, philosophers and social scientists in general have influenced laws and legislations a lot, by exercising freedom of expression. As preeminent thinkers of the time, their statements impelled the people, consciously or unconsciously, to accept such notions as usury (*ribā*), libertarian sexual relationship, legally incorporating them on the basis of people’s consent and approval! On the other hand, it is impossible for a legal system, which disregards the innate desires of people and the emergence of new relations to be absolutely ‘advanced’. In line with this, you can observe changes in some socialist laws such as those of the family.

3. The third model of jurisprudence and laws is both ‘advanced’ and ‘adherent’. In view of the needs of mankind that remain inalterable with the passage of time amidst changes in science, social relations and others, this model is ‘advanced’ and in view of the emergence of changes in subjects and applications of phenomena and aspects of life as well as the appearance of more recent relations, it is ‘adherent’.

From a jurisprudential or legal perspective, the religion of Islam belongs to

the third model. That is, in view of the Islamic jurisprudence or laws' adherence to the subjects and manifestations of life as well as the set of rational principles approved by Islam, it is 'adherent'. And, because of the rulings and laws related to the inalterable material and spiritual needs of people, it is 'advanced'. These rulings and laws encompass all issues pertaining to the four types of relationship, which are innate and permanent.

Question 6

What are the things that give way to defects and shortcomings in the legal and juristic systems?

Answer: If the identity of a juristic and legal system has come into being on the basis of divine revelation, sound reason and natural disposition, no element can tarnish it and no defect or damage can find its way into it. No defect or damage can penetrate the real results of science and any change in the result due to the change in circumstances is not a defect. This is because the necessity for change and reconsideration of opinion on issues, principles and rules due to the emergence of [new] happenings, subjects and applications is not a defect or shortcoming. It rather affirms the capability of a juristic and legal system and is considered a proof of the system's resilience and greatness.

The ways of penetration of defects and shortcoming into juristic and legal systems are related to things outside the essence of the system, such as:

1. The manner of benefiting from them;
2. Digression in expressions, terms and precedence, in the sense that any view or opinion, which comes first, is given more weight by the juriprudents and legalists!
3. Extreme belief on the value of one's views and inference, and inattention and negligence of the emerging changes in subjects, relations and the like;
4. The spirit of extreme submission (not a feeling of rational respect) to prominent figures in law and jurisprudence;
5. Movement through an exclusive professional channel (understanding in jurisprudence and law) that juriprudents and legalists rely more on jurisprudential and legal disposition, without paying attention to the causes, motives and inclinations of the two (jurisprudential and legal). Of course, since veracity ('adālah), God-wariness (*taqwā*) and prominence in

knowledge are conditions of being a jurisprudent and legalist in Islam, one in charge of the said two fields can volitionally be the factor for the penetration of this defect or shortcoming.

Question 7

Is the form of human life the product of a legal (jurisprudential) system alone, or are there other things other than law and jurisprudence that contribute in the formation of human life?

Answer: If “the form of human life” here refers to the physical appearances of life which human beings have shown throughout history in different societies, it is clear that by removing conflicts and contradictions among human inclinations, legal systems have been considerably effective in shaping human life. In other aspects, however, the influence of legal system upon human life is not to that extent. And the reasons for this can be sought in the following factors:¹

1. People’s extremely powerful element of selfishness;
2. For the selfish holders of power laws and other obligatory arrangements are mere ‘cobwebs’ that catch only the weakest of animals, but not Hobbesian Leviathans,² or Nietzschean/Machiavelian ‘expediencies’.

And if “the form of human life” refers to the general course of life throughout history, we must say that there are different factors—both independent and dependent—involved along this process. Discourses on the philosophy of history, particularly what pertains to the ‘agent of motion in history’, undertake the explanation and interpretation of these different factors. Common (non-Islamic) legal systems function like filters for the preservation of the system and form of life. As such, throughout history, due to the emergence of revolutions, which topple down previous systems and give way to new systems, old filters go and give way to new ones. Other matters come into being in history, transforming legal systems, and thus, changing the form and course of human life in turn.

¹ Since the functional scope of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is wider than that of law (*huqūq*), encompassing acts of worship and laws pertaining to man’s relationship with himself as well, in reply to question 7, jurisprudence must be distinguished from law, and each of them must be examined separately in relation to this question.

² Leviathan: a sea monster or any big animal that preys on other animals

Now, we shall deal with the effects of Islamic jurisprudence in shaping human life while keeping its definition in view. There is no doubt that every Muslim—both in the individual and collective sense—benefits from jurisprudential laws in shaping life as much as possible. It is explicitly recorded in history that Muslims in different societies have been committed to act upon their beliefs and jurisprudential laws, which the ruling elite in those societies do not believe in and regard them as hostile to their political systems, and in many cases, they deprive the people of different aspects of social life. This thing happens in some neighboring countries and also happened in our society before.

Question 8

Are legal (and jurisprudential) systems capable of clashing with natural realities and laws, or should these systems be consistent with these realities and laws?

Answer: If legal and jurisprudential systems, in general, go against natural laws and realities, they will definitely go in abeyance and cease to function. In the parlance of logic, this major premise is axiomatic but the main question of the minor premise is the above proof and that is, can legal (and jurisprudential) systems in general endure while clashing with natural realities and laws? Obviously, the answer is in the negative. The crux of the matter is that we must have some explanation about natural realities and laws to know the source of the prohibition or order while harmonizing legal (and jurisprudential) systems with natural realities and laws.

Natural realities and laws encompass all events, phenomena and laws. At the time of their emergence, they can destroy natural human life; for example, earthquakes, floods, epidemics, etc. Obviously, in order to save itself, mankind is compelled to struggle against the realities and laws that bring the elements of its destruction. If there is somebody who urges the people to submit and not struggle against natural realities and laws, some sensible person must deal with him.

Now, this question comes to the fore: Is the power of human-like beasts something unnatural? Yes, the penetrating eyes of Napoleon Bonaparte¹

¹. Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821): a military and political leader of France and Emperor of the French as Napoleon I, whose actions shaped European politics in the early 19th century. [Trans.]

whose glances could make a brave soldier forget his words were something natural. The ingenuity of savage Asian conquerors like Genghis Khan,¹ Hulagu Khan,² Tamerlane³ and bloodthirsty European butchers like Nero,⁴ Caligula⁵ and Cesare Borgia,⁶ were also natural phenomena. This does not mean that they had freely developed the essence of ingenuity, or found it and inculcated it in their minds.⁷

At any rate, in a bid to destroy all original cultures and advanced civilizations, it is enough for you to say, “O builders of advanced cultures and civilizations! Sit idly and do not resist natural realities and laws and let these destructive forces run their courses.”

Meanwhile, all social scientists, those who are relatively more familiar with all dimensions—physical and spiritual—of the human being, know that just as nature or, in general, the universe—in which the human being is included—has realities and laws of its own, the human soul also has its own

¹. Genghis Khan (1162–1227): the founder, *Khan* (ruler) and *Khagan* (emperor) of the Mongol Empire, which became the largest contiguous empire in history after his death. [Trans.]

². Hulagu Khan (c. 1217-65): a grandson of Genghis Khan and Mongol ruler who conquered much of Southwest Asia. [Trans.]

³. Timur, normally known as Tamerlane in English (1336-1405): a fourteenth-century conqueror of Western, South and Central Asia, founder of the Timurid Empire and Timurid dynasty (1370–1405) in Central Asia, and great grandfather of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Dynasty, which survived until 1857 as the Mughal Empire in India. [Trans.]

⁴. Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, commonly known as Nero (37-68 CE): the Roman Emperor from 54 to 68 CE and the last emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty, whose rule is often associated with extravagance and tyranny, including the execution of his mother and stepbrother. [Trans.]

⁵. Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, commonly known as Caligula and sometimes Gaius (12-41 CE): Roman Emperor from 37 to 41 CE. After two years of his reign, surviving sources focus upon his cruelty, extravagance, and sexual perversity, presenting him as an insane tyrant. [Trans.]

⁶. Cesare Borgia (1475/6-1507): Duke of Valentinois, a Valencian *condottiero*, politician, cardinal, and son of Pope Alexander VI of Spain and his long-term mistress Vannozza dei Cattanei. He is known for his cruelty and treachery. [Trans.]

⁷. Of course, the naturalness of the forms of power and ingenuities has no contradiction with justification and benefiting from those that are devoid of freewill and responsibility.

realities and laws. It is clear that the most fundamental condition for logical understanding of natural realities and laws is [correct] understanding of the realities and laws pertaining to the human soul. Now, if the selfish nature of a person says, “I am the goal while others are means,” will moral, legal and religious laws not take any action against this by relying on the vicious notion: “The scorpion’s sting, through optional grudge, is with human beings. But, it is not the dictate of its nature to sting and endanger human lives! Set aside the nature, and let it follow its own course.” It was the same baseless statement, which was once the slogan of French Physiocrats¹: “Take your seat and graciously place your life at the disposal of the factors of death!” It is never so; the truth is as follows:

افتضای طبیعتش این است

نیش عقرب نه از ره کین است

The scorpion’s sting is not through spite.

This is the dictate of its nature.

No one can deny the fact that just as nature has its own laws, the human soul also has its own laws. Now, we shall point out some of these laws:²

1. The nature of the human soul necessitates subsistence and not deterioration and extinction. To prepare the human soul for a felicitous subsistence, expression of selfishness, extreme profiteering, hedonism, and self-interest is the first law. Any event, phenomenon or natural law, which opposes this vital law that guarantees eternal life, must be checked in favor of the law of “the soul in its general sense”.
2. The human soul yearns for the attainment of the lofty goal of life.
3. The human soul ardently desires to understand the relationship with itself that disciplines and refines it for sublimation of its pure natural life, common with other animals, to the “rational life”, whose end is to be situated in the Axis of Sublime Divine Perfection.

¹. Physiocrats: a group of economists who believed that the wealth of nations was derived solely from the value of “land agriculture” or “land development”. [Trans.]

². Let us be reminded of this immortal saying which is the divine logic of the prophets and pious sages including Plato:

مت بالارادة تحيى بالطبيعة.

“Die willingly so as to live naturally.”

That is to say, kill (i.e. suppress) your selfish inclinations to attain eternal life with the original nature of the soul.

4. If the human soul wishes to attain the station of harmony and solidarity with fellow human beings, who are also parts of the caravan toward felicity, it must achieve the rank of “one equals to all and all equal to one”.

Disregarding these primordial laws of the human soul vis-à-vis the realities and laws of nature is tantamount to a fatal campaign against the self. Now, we shall explicitly state the gist of the reply to the question, thus:

If the jurisprudential systems show any sign of contradiction with natural realities and laws; if those natural things confront the established realities and facts of human principles, naturally those natural things (natural events and laws) must be checked in favor of the human principles. And, if the jurisprudential systems become so static that they lack the necessary measure to deal with natural events, realities and laws, there is a need for their reform. Even in this case, however, generalization does not solve anything or stimulate any progress. In fact, they must be dealt with on a case-to-case basis and be affirmed as clear manifestations of the contradiction of a certain legal and jurisprudential system with natural realities and laws. [Thereafter,] you must strive for the solution.

The duty of both the jurisprudents and the natural scientists is to always enter their respective fields with a fresh perception, understanding and research. It is not that only jurisprudence and law are not supposed to grapple with natural realities and laws, but rather natural and social sciences are also not supposed to consider themselves authoritative—in the name of scientism—to express an opinion on jurisprudence, law and other social sciences by means of a probability, supposition, hypothesis, or theory.

We say “in the name of scientism” because in the past two centuries, hundreds of theories, hypotheses and presumptions have been presented by thinkers in the arena of human knowledge, and the narrowminded and ignoramus have regarded them as “science”. In the end, however, with the discovery of their refutations, they have been thrown out of the domain of definitive sciences. With this distinction, it can be proved that so far there has been no jurisprudential and legal principle or law that goes against any established scientific *fact* (not theory, hypothesis or presumption).

Question 9

Does the Islamic legal system allow any type of legal system to emerge?

Answer: The Islamic legal system is like the Islamic philosophical system.

By keeping its own worldview and essential presumptions in relation to the four types of relationship, this philosophical system has the capacity to offer tens, and perhaps in some cases, hundreds of philosophical and epistemological tendencies, and to accommodate any kind of idea, principle or rule expressed on the basis of reason and pure intrinsic conceptions. This is because as affirmed in these discourses, the Islamic legal system revolves around the axis of “rational human life”. For instance, since the vehicle and hundreds of other amenities entered the scene of human life, tens of principles and rules have been discussed, Islam has never adopted an opposite stance against these principles and rules. However, that Islam could accommodate tens, and perhaps in some cases, hundreds of philosophical tendencies because of its depth and vastness is more than enough to require a detailed reasoning.

Question 10

Is it possible for the outside world to go to the extent of rendering the Islamic legal system totally inefficient and replace it with a totally different legal-jurisprudential system?

Answer: If the physiological and psychological makeup of man is so transformed that man with his immense potential ceases to exist, it is clear that in such a time the Islamic legal system will cease to function absolutely, because there will be no human being whose legal-jurisprudential system it is supposed to regulate.

گفت قاضی ثبت العرش ای پسر تا بر او نقشی کنیم از خیر و شر

*The Judge said [to the Sufi], “Make the roof firm, O son,
So that I may decorate it with good and evil¹*

You are not supposed to discuss the ineffectivity of the Islamic law and jurisprudence as merely the result of natural and technological transformation, change in human relations, and the like. You can also observe the ineffectivity of the Islamic law and jurisprudence prior to those changes, when the devastating storm of utilitarianism, lust, hedonism, and greed for power crushed the human lives in the ocean of history with the rocks of the said proclivities, shattering them and leaving no trace of

¹. Nicholson, *The Mathnawi of Jalālu 'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 6, Part 47, line 1534, p. 175. That is, first prove your case, then I will give judgment. [Trans.]

humanity. Just like bolts and nuts of a lifeless machine in the hands of selfish power-worshippers, tens of millions of people plunged into luxury and pleasure, like unconscious and unthinking dolls leaping on their hands. It was because of the possible coming of such a day that Einstein,¹ one of the famous contemporary figures, had warned of a third world war, saying that if this war occurs, the world and its inhabitants will be annihilated. With utmost clarity, he also said, "Will you feel bad about the extinction of the human race?" The story is as follows:

"In 1949, Einstein thus wrote about his meeting with an American leader: 'I was recently discussing with a smart American figure who was apparently a good man. I reminded him that the menace of a new war threatens humanity and if such a war occurs, the human race will likely be wiped out and only a transnational organization can prevent such a menace. But, with utmost surprise, I heard his reply, 'For what reason do you oppose the extinction of the human race to such an extent?'"²

If we examine the succeeding words of Einstein in interpreting his interlocutor's reply, we will find out that one of the main reasons that induced him to give such a shocking reply was the same depreciation of human life and mental activities that emanate from the misuse of the bounties God has bestowed to His servants in this world. People have totally crushed spiritual mirth from human life and only live on the basis of fatalism, hedonism or libertianism. In continuation, Einstein says:

"Such a harsh and categorical reply indicates inward suffering and outward affliction which is a product of the modern world. In my opinion, this reply is that of a person who has strived hard to excel but failed and has lost even the hope to succeed. This reply bespeaks of a painful seclusion from which all human beings suffer."³

¹. Albert Einstein (1879-1955): German, Swiss and American mathematician and atomic physicist who stimulated a revolution in physics by discovering the theory of general relativity and for which he received the Nobel Prize in physics in 1921 and is often regarded as the father of modern physics. [Trans.]

². Philipp Frank, *Zindigī-ye Einstein*, trans. Hasan Şaffārī, p. 541.

³. *Ibid.*, p. 542.

Question 11

In your opinion, to what extent can religion interfere in temporal affairs? Can it be said that religion has drawn the overall lines of material prosperity, leaving man to himself with respect to the minute details?

Answer: It is clear that the schools—both religious and non-religious—that draw the lines of the dos and don'ts of man in the realms of both corporeal life and eternal life pertain to general matters and not to particular facts and issues. But, the burden of identifying this general guideline and applying it to particulars cases lies on the people. It is for this reason that we say that the religion of Islam has generally both aspects of ‘advancement’ and ‘adherence’. This religion pays attention to all beliefs, laws and duties related to the permanent material and spiritual needs of man. Given its aspect of ‘advancement’ and the regulation of permanent material and spiritual needs, it brings human beings to perfection, but in regards to the details, subjects and choice on the ways of living (provided that they do not against reason and the established Islamic rules), it has approved the rational choices of people. In today's jargon, it has the aspect of ‘adherence’ and for this reason, Islam has essentially its own innovative and constructive quality, which necessitates its being perpetual.

God's absolute justice requires that, whatever potential human progress needs in the “rational life” in this world and the eternal life in the Hereafter, the guideline of Islam in the realms of material life and eternal abode is perfect. And, if ever there is a person or a society which lacks such potential, for whatever reason, no defect whatsoever can be attributed to the perfect guideline of Islam.

Question 12

Ibn Khaldūn said that in order to have an average or moderate society, there is no need for prophets, and in turn, for religion, and history shows that people who had no prophets were not incapable or inept in leading their lives. Thus, anyone who insists that only under the aegis of religious thought that mundane prosperity could be ensured only expresses his own religious conviction. But, if a person expresses his opinion from outside religion, he will find it to be inconsistent with historical facts, rather, discover the opposite. That is, there were nonreligious nations that were able to manage themselves well and if ever they had problems, these were common human problems, which were not caused by irreligiosity and the lack of religion's

supervision. I want to know your opinion regarding this belief of Ibn Khaldūn.

Answer: First, we must examine the statements of Ibn Khaldūn in this regard. In *Al-Muqaddimah*, he thus says:

“The weapons [naturally] made for the defence of human beings against the aggressiveness of dumb animals do not suffice... Thus, something else is needed for defence against the aggressiveness of human beings toward each other... The person who exercises a restraining influence, therefore, must be one of them. He must dominate them and have power and authority over them, so that no one of them will be able to attack another. This is the meaning of royal authority. It has thus become clear that royal authority is a natural quality of man, which is absolutely necessary for mankind. The philosophers mention that it also exists among certain dumb animals, such as the bees and the locusts. One discerns among them the existence of authority and obedience to a leader. They follow one who is distinguished as their leader by his natural characteristics and body. However, outside of human beings, these things exist as the result of natural disposition and divine guidance, and not as the result of an ability to think or to administrate. The philosophers go further. They attempt to give logical proof of the existence of prophethood and to show that prophethood is a natural quality of man. In this connection, they carry the argument to its ultimate consequences and say that human beings absolutely require some authority to exercise a restraining influence. They go on to say that such restraining influence exists through the religious law ordained by God and revealed to mankind by a human being. He is distinguished from the rest of mankind by special qualities of divine guidance that God gave him, in order that he might find the others submissive to him and ready to accept what he says. Eventually, the existence of an authority among them and over them becomes a fact that is accepted without the slightest disapproval or dissent. This proposition of the philosophers is not logical, as one can see. Existence and human life can materialize without [the existence of prophethood and religious law] through injunctions, which a person in authority may devise on his own or with the help of a group, that enables him to force the others to follow him wherever he wants to go. People who have a [divinely revealed]

book and who follow the prophets are few in number in comparison with the Zoroastrians who have none. The latter constitute the majority of the world's inhabitants. Still, they have possessed dynasties and monuments, not to mention life itself. They still possess these things at this time in the intemperate zones in the north and the south. This is in contrast with human life in the state of anarchy, with no one to exercise a restraining influence. That would be impossible. This shows that the philosophers are wrong when they assume that prophethood exists by necessity. The existence of prophethood is not required by logic. Its [necessary character] is indicated by the religious law, as was the belief of the early Muslims. God gives success and guidance.”¹

There are weak points in the statements of Ibn Khaldūn the most important of which are the following:

1. Ibn Khaldūn regarded divine guidance as essential for the animals rather than human beings, who have so much potential. He considered human beings needless of divine guidance, or he regarded the guidance endowed to other creatures as also sufficient for human beings. However, because of his extremely diverse potential and faculties, man's need for special guidance is more pressing.
2. Ibn Khaldūn said, “This proposition of the philosophers is not logical, as one can see. Existence and human life can materialize without [the existence of prophethood and religious law].” He must indeed be reminded that the goal of human life cannot be summed up in a few days of eating and drinking, sleeping, anger, and lust. If man is left to himself, he would not give up carnal desires and sensual life in order to attain the lofty goal of life, which is to be situated in the Axis of Divine Perfection. Man's movement toward “rational life,” (*tayyibah*), life grounded on clear evidence or linked with God (“*My life and my death are all for the sake of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds*”²) is not possible without intellection and divine law.

¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-'Ibar wa Dīwān al-Mubtada' wa 'l-Khabar fi Ayyām al-'Arab wa 'l-'Ajām wa l-Barbar*, better known as *Al-Muqaddimah*, vol. 1, pp. 43-44.

The translation is adapted from Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Rosenthal, pp. 47-48. [Trans.]

² *Sūrat al-An 'ām* 6:162.

3. Ibn Khaldūn has committed an amazing historical mistake which is beyond explanation. He said, “People who have a [divinely revealed] book and who follow the prophets are few in number in comparison with the Zoroastrians who have none. The latter constitute the majority of the world’s inhabitants.”

First, to have fire-temples in Persia, China and India does not make the Zoroastrians the majority of the world’s inhabitants. Second, as we read in books on comparative religion, the established theory about the Zoroastrians is that they have a religion and their prophet is Zoroaster (Zartusht) and their sacred scripture is called the Avesta. Of course, the complete details of this religion and the history of emergence of Zoroaster are considerably unclear. What is certain is that the Zoroasters believe in two sources that regulate the universe, viz. Yazdān (representing good and light) and Ahriman (representing evil and darkness). They also acknowledge the existence of angels with whom they seek closeness. They regard simple elements, particularly fire, as sacred, linking all creatures to the Supreme Being. They have a scripture and perform a specific ritual of worship. In sum, Zoroastrianism is a religion and for this reason, it is officially recognized in Muslim countries. Regarding Ibn Khaldūn’s statements, it is possible that what he meant was the notion of divine grace whose manifestation, among many others, according to the theologians (*mutakallimīn*), is the sending down of the prophets, and not justice that necessitates rational duty.

4. In Chapter 51, Ibn Khaldūn said something contradicting this notion. He thus said:

“We have mentioned before in more than one place that human social organization is something necessary. It is what is meant by “civilization” which we have been discussing. (People) in any social organization must have someone who exercises a restraining influence and rules them and to whom recourse may be had. His rule over them is sometimes based upon a divinely revealed religious law. They are obliged to submit to it in view of their belief in reward and punishment in the other world, (things that were indicated) by the person who brought them (their religious law). Sometimes, (his rule is based) upon rational politics. People are obliged to submit to it in view of the reward they expect from the ruler after he has become acquainted with what is good for them. The first (type of rule) is useful for this world and for the other world, because the lawgiver

knows the ultimate interest of the people... The second (type of rule) is useful only for this world... Now, the afore-mentioned rational politics may be of two types. The first type of rational politics may concern itself with the (public) interest in general, and with the ruler's interest in connection with the administration of his realm, in particular. This was the politics of the Persians. It is something related to philosophy. God made this type of politics superfluous for us in Islam at the time of the caliphate. The religious laws take its place in connection with both general and special interests, for they also include the maxims (of the philosophers) and the rules of royal authority... Muslim rulers, however, practice this type of politics in accordance with the requirements of the Muslim religious law, as much as they are able to. Therefore, the political norms here are a mixture of religious laws and ethical rules, norms that are natural in social organization together with a certain necessary concern for strength and group feeling. Examples to be followed in (the practice of) this (kind of politics) are, in the first place, the religious law, and then, the maxims of the philosophers and the way of life of rulers (of the past).”¹

In our opinion, these words of Ibn Khaldūn constitute a totally correct belief. It is clear that life anchored in religion compared to the one anchored in pure intellection (if it is possible at all) is more comprehensive.

Question 13

It seems that the religious framework is indeed universal and perfect in the sense that it ensures both prosperity in the world and felicity in the Hereafter. But, life anchored in nonreligious policy largely manages mundane life. Even then, it is not clear whether this management is identical with worldly prosperity or not. Moreover, there is no guarantee if the otherworldly felicity is ensured or not for a person.

Human life is a uniform reality consisting of two stages; viz. this world and the Hereafter, and to be more precise, two domains, viz. prior to death and after death. These two stages are not of the same width but of the same

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303.

The translation is adapted from Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 256-257. [Trans.]

length; man's life in the Hereafter is the crystallization and inward dimension of his life in this world, and by considering the inward effects, religion manages and guides man's individual and social life, which the human intellect is incapable of doing without the guidance of religion. Therefore, one cannot rely on mere schemes of the human intellect, in ensuring the individual and social prosperity in this world with the otherworldly felicity of human beings, without reliance on religious guidance, except in cases in which the religion itself has allowed us to follow rational guidance.

I would like to ask another question. Some empirical philosophers of religion in the West believe that if religion is really meant for mundane prosperity, this claim can be tested in this world, but if it is also meant for otherworldly felicity, this claim of religion cannot be tested in this world because no one has seen the Hereafter. Sir, what can you say about this?

Answer: The laboratory for this claim of bestowing felicity in the Hereafter consists of man's intellect, conscience and pure nature (*fitrah*) that can distinguish baseless things linked with fleeting animalistic desires from facts that are compatible with the perfect and progress-seeking essence of man. Felicity in the eternal world belongs to those who earn the merit in this world to be situated in the Divine Threshold in the eternal world. It belongs to those who spend their lives in this world craving for perfection by means of organizing and rectifying the four types of relationship. Thus, any religion or set of beliefs that explains to the people the various channels of this feeling and ardent desire has ensured their felicity in the Hereafter.

Question 14

Sir, please also tell us something about the status of art from the viewpoint of religion, i.e. Islam, especially about the criterion for the religious or Islamic nature of an art.

Answer: First of all, we must give a description of art. A complete *definition* of art, like the definition of other things especially the mysterious within a person—such as the mind and soul—is either impossible or at least very difficult to formulate. Hence, we shall content ourselves here with a *description* of art.

We must regard art as having three phases:

First phase: It is a special feeling caused by a specific genius or ardent

desire. Art is one of the inner realities within a person and it does not pertain to imagination, illusions and nominal things. It is like genius, discovering and craving for them. Apart from the essential value of this reality it has the potential to possess actual value.

Second phase: It is the mental framework, the identity of a person. When an artistic feeling is under way like a limpid fountain, it accommodates special features of the mental framework, and is ready to appear in society. In terms of special features, quality and values, the fate of art in this phase is determined. Like a limpid fountain, which flows from a pure source, it follows its course before reaching the bases of trees, flowers and plants or being mixed with other things, detrimental or beneficial to the roots of plants. As such, one must scrutinize the main root of decency or indecency of the various arts. It must be seen which mind provides the life-giving water of artistic feelings and which human identity justifies it. The common arts, which unfortunately go against and undermine the pristine values of man's "rational life" in the name of arts and culture, belong to the first category. The expressed sense of genius in the second phase can either be contaminated by harmful substances, or presented as excellent elements of man's "rational life" in this phase.

Third phase: It is the actual piece of art in the outside world. It is in this phase that art is connected with the members of society. If the purpose behind making an artistic work is to relieve the pain and suffering of people, and to rectify, organize and improve their lives in the context of "rational life". ("My life and my death are all for the sake of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds"¹), then this art is not only religious or Islamic but it is also highly desirable, and regarded as obligatory (*wājibāt*). This is the general law governing art from the viewpoint of religion. Of course, there are ample discussions on how to identify the actual manifestations of decent and indecent arts contained in pertinent treatises and books.

If the goal of art is solely to present artistic talent and show sublime feeling which the artistic talent generates—provided that it does not bring about any arbitrary effect on the people's morality and does not deprive them of religion—there is no problem at all, except when the artist does it out of selfishness. Like an oil lamp, he sets himself on fire and temporarily gives light so that his work draws interest. Like law ('advanced' law and

¹. *Sūrat al-An 'ām* 6:162.

‘adherent’ law) there is, ‘advanced’ art and ‘adherent’ art. The value of ‘advanced’ art lies in the fact that with pure mind and soul, the artists activate their artistic talent by benefiting from lofty human principles, justifying them by the discovery of a wholesome life toward the Sublime Threshold of Perfection and benefiting from it.

Question 15

What is your concept of “religious technology”?

Answer: No technological instrument, device or stuff is ‘religious’ or ‘nonreligious’. In fact, when the basic needs of a person prompt him to pursue a technological innovation or invention so as to meet those needs, this is something indicated in the Qur’ān:

﴿وَاعِدُوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ﴾

“Prepare against them whatever you can of [military] power.”¹

That is, “You amass and prepare whatever you can of power for the sake of defending your life, prestige and honor against the enemy. Such a device is motivated by religion. In the past, some simpletons tried to extract the principles of all the technological inventions and advancements ever achieved by mankind, from the Qur’ān and traditions (*ahadīth*). This was an exercise in futility, because the main function of heavenly books and religious sources is not to teach mankind the necessity of mathematics, physics, chemistry, botany, and geology. The main function of the prophets and the heavenly books is to teach mankind the basic needs in the realm of “rational life” and to campaign for meeting those needs. But the quantity, quality and nature of the devise or instrument supposed to perform the said function depends on the dictates of reason, types of understanding, acumen for discovery and invention, and kinds of skills God has given to His servants.

Obviously, just as the reason behind the necessity for and the manner of preparing the shovel for farming, a specific equipment for constructing a building, and formulating different types of medicines for curing diseases is not a function of the prophets and heavenly books. Similarly, it is not the function of the prophets and the heavenly books to state the ways of producing technological devices, manufacturing computers, analyzing

¹. *Sūrat al-Anfāl* 8:60.

atomic particles, and the like. Sometimes, there are general indications about basic principles governing the universe so that supernatural leaders (the prophets, Imāms and *awliyā'*), the heedful, the wise and the authorities (*ūlū'l-albāb*) know and prove to other people that the knowledge contained in the heavenly books are based upon knowledge of the general principles and fundamentals.

Question 16

Sir, in view of the fact that economics has two facets, i.e. value and knowledge, can it be said that since economics is a science and deals with the external world, it is not specified if it is Islamic or not, and since it is value-laden and is of nominal (*i'tibārī*) things, it can be Islamic or non-Islamic?

Answer: At the outset, it must be pointed out that the term *i'tibārī* is not accurate in value-laden cases of dos and don'ts because *i'tibār* (validity) does not only signify *ja'l* (forge), *wad'* (standing), or *inshā'* (composition) which is *i'tibār* in a sense. In fact, when an *i'tibār* or an *inshā'* appears, there are realities such as self-preservation, instinct, primary or secondary needs in prior phases, and there are also realities that will appear after appearance of *i'tibār* (composition, standing, or convention) and all of them have actual reality. Let us return to the main answer to the question. We must first take into account the [main] principles and then deal with the secondary principles and rules. Islamic economics is based upon a number of general principles and fundamentals some of which we shall mention below:

1. In Islam, ownership is not a goal but rather a means. It is the response of man's specific instinct in matters of specific laws pertaining to him, the organizer of the relationship among people, and their relationship with economic matters.
2. Economics in Islam has both individual and social dimensions.
3. Based on the above principle, ownership in Islam is not limited, and as long as it does not obstruct the livelihood and rights of other people in society, it is free.
4. The general rule is to have ownership, unless it harms the people in society. For this reason, some utilizations of what one owns is prohibited. For example:
 - Hoarding of essential items for society

- Hoarding that leads to inflation and disruption of economic activities
- Production and distribution of harmful products
- Production and distribution of means of debauchery
- Usury (*ribā*)
- Production and distribution of narcotic drugs
- Selling of weapons to hostile states and nations at the time of war, except defensive devices
- Production and distribution of the articles of excessive luxury
- Extravagance in whatever form
- The necessity for preparing the means of livelihood from the most basic animals' fodder to the highest means of livelihood, whether they are basic agricultural products or produced by the most advanced technology ever available
- In the production and distribution of economic commodities, priority is given to those which are more essential for human life

5. The value of work, both mental and physical, in accordance with the Qur'ānic verse, "*And do not cheat the people of their goods,*"¹ must be real and not artificial. The outcome of this vital economic principle is that if a worker is not aware of the real value (amount of wage) of his work, or due to an emergency situation, he is satisfied with a wage lesser than the real value of his work, he does not get the real value of, or wage for, his work and the ruler is supposed to prepare the grounds for the worker to get the real value of his work.

In case of free competition, the supervision and guidance of the state is indispensable as this prevents people motivated by self-interest to violate the rights of others

6. Economic relations with other people and nations are free, provided that they do not go against the Islamic laws.

It is clear that the execution of these general principles requires specific cases, means and tools, as well as establishing relations with nature and

¹. *Sūrat al-Shu'arā'* 26:183.

people, and acquiring sciences and crafts which are needed to provide for and organize those affairs. As such, they pertain to the channel of religious obligations, whether these sciences and crafts can be learned within Muslim societies or in foreign communities provided that, this does not lead to foreign domination and spread of corruption in Muslim societies.

Given this reply, it becomes clear that any reality that has something to do with the concerns of Islam such as the relationship between subject and decree, premise and conclusion, means and end, and the like, ceases to be neutral and acquires a religious color. If providing the means of livelihood for people requires the learning of related sciences and acquiring a specific technology, anyone (state, society, or individual) who does not take the necessary steps shall be regarded as accountable and offender.

Question 17

[Comment: In continuation of the professor's talk, what is worth-mentioning is that since man is a free being and his freedom also interferes in the diversity of his economic life, a stable economic condition in all periods cannot be considered for man. It is also for this reason that Islam has not introduced a rigid science of economics for all stages of human life, although fixed morality and legal decrees in the form of real cases are taken into account for all periods, and whose difference with economics shall be scrutinized elsewhere. This point is not a defect in the religion of Islam but one of its merits. Moreover, no school of thought or science can offer a fixed science of economics. The essence of science, including economics, changes or evolves according to the conditions and exigency of time, and a fixed science of economics is something impossible. Nonetheless, Islam supervises and guides economics in two aspects, i.e. in terms of jurisprudence (legality) and morality. Economic moral orders, and economic decrees, and jurisprudential rules of Islam, do not establish a distinct science of economics but, at the same time, they cannot allow just any science of economics to emerge and operate. Thus, the science of economics allowed to emerge and flourish in Islamic society is that which harmonizes itself with the moral and jurisprudential rules as well as the moral and legal decrees of Islamic economics. Similar is the relationship of Islam with other new branches of social sciences such as sociology, psychology and political science. In other words, Islam does not offer a distinct sociology, psychology, political science, and economics. Yet, it has stated certain principles in those fields and by relying on them, any field is allowed to

emerge and flourish. Therefore, if we ever talk about “Islamic sociology,” “Islamic psychology,” “Islamic political science,” or “Islamic economics,” this means that they are organized in concordance and harmony with the Islamic views and fundamentals in those fields. This does not imply that Islam has brought down a complete and comprehensive “science” in economics, political science, psychology, sociology, and the like, thus making us needless of human research in those fields. Keeping this in view, in economics, too, any economic system that succeeds in harmonizing itself with the legal foundations, requirements and rules as well as economic values of Islam is religious and Islamic. And any economic system that fails to conform and reconcile with them is neither religious nor Islamic, and Islam and Islamic society must not allow it to emerge and operate.]

Question 18

“Religious art” and “religious technology” are specific. I want to raise a more general question: Does labeling these things as “religious” suggest that every thing can be a means or instrument for understanding and realizing religious thought? Can all things have such a function?

Answer: Some thinkers do not have a correct notion of religion. Many Western thinkers, in particular, belong to this group. They have accepted the notion that religion is a personal matter between man and God and, severed religion from all matters and aspects of material and spiritual life. By making this *heroic* step, they have actually separated the essence of religion from human existence, practically reducing man—in the words of the conscious and wise men of the West—to the level of unconscious car dents, and talking about Epicurus and Epicureanism¹ in order to amuse him. They have entertained him with debauchery, a drinking spree and addiction, so much so, that in the words of Mawlānā (Rūmī), they have undermined his thinking and mental power.

سوی اسفل برد او را فکر او

جز ذکر نه دین او و ذکر او

¹. Epicureanism: a school of philosophy founded around 307 BC on the basis of the teachings of Epicurus, an ancient Greek atomic materialist philosopher, who believed that the greatest good was to seek modest pleasures in order to attain a state of tranquility (*ataraxia*) and freedom from fear, as well as absence of bodily pain (*aporia*) through knowledge of the workings of the world and the limits of one's desires. [Trans.]

Nihil est religio et precatio ejus nisi penis.¹

His thought has borne him down to the lowest depth.²

This intellectual degradation in the past centuries, as in the time of Mawlānā (Rūmī), was upheld by a minority and advocated behind closed doors, but, in contemporary time, thanks to the likes of Freud—the Genghis Khans with a dim light labeled “science” in their hands and with “scientific masks” on their faces—have drawn the people to futility. During this period, by taking pleasure in the way of life of bees and “beast in every aspect,” they have ceased to think and talk about the essence of life, and some have even gone to the extent of impudently saying, “To think is a kind of illness.”

This destructive weapon against the essence of man can also be detected in the minds of the likes of Sartre who said, “Man has history but has no essence”; that is, [only] man and his behavior exists!

In the course of explaining the current answer by inference, it is suggested to refer first to the general definition of religion we have presented earlier. If the first level of consciousness, which is vigilance (*yaqzah*), is given to a person, and remains in him, all moments of his life shall be directed according to the Qur’ānic verse, ‘*My life and my death are all for the sake of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.*’³ After that—from his most trivial action to his greatest exploits and thoughts; from a simple notion to the most elaborate and intricate scientific-technological ideas; also, from the initial chant of *Allāhu akbar* (Allah is the greatest) to the acts of worship performed at all times—all moments of his life shall be irrigated by the water of religion.⁴ Now, this question arises: What is this vigilance, which if possessed by a person, his entire life acquires religious color?

Vigilance refers to that consciousness which makes a person consider himself a purposefulness part of a grand totality that operates according to the direction and command of God’s law, and moves towards eternity moment by moment. This vigilance breeds another vigilance, which a person

¹ That is, “There is nothing from his religion and prayer except the penalties.” [Trans.]

² Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ’ddīn Rūmī*, Book 2, Part 89, line 3151, p. 331. [Trans.]

³ *Sūrat al-An ‘ām* 6:162. [Trans.]

⁴ *Sūrat al-An ‘ām* 6:162. [Trans.]

will experience with utmost clarity:

ما را ورقی دگر نوشتند	تا مایه طبعها سرشتند
سررشه کار باز جوئیم	تا در نگریم و راز جوئیم

It is with this realization that a person understands that if all knowledge and learning in the world are inculcated in the mind, yet they do not contribute at all in the process of his perfection, he will acquire no benefit from them except their natural existence.

The fact is that all moments and minutest details of man's life are under the supervision and dominance of God. By realizing that life is a very important part of a purposeful totality which is moving toward the Presence of the Lord, man's ardent desire to reach the Lordly Presence flows from his inner nature, and thereafter, even the drawing he makes is in a state of searching, and this as a whole is an act of worship.

هر کس کاو دور ماند از اصل خیش	باز جوید روزگار وصل خویش
Every one who is left far from his source	Looks back for the time when he was united with it. ¹

In conclusion, you can ask, which action, saying, thinking, moments, and even breathing of such a person is not religious?

In the words of Mawlānā (Rūmī),

اندک اندک دزد از جبس جهان	وین نفس جانهای ما را همچنان
صاعداً منا إلى حيث علم	تا اليه يصعد اطیاب الكلم
متحفنا منا إلى دار البقاء	ترتقى انفاسنا بالمنتقى
ضعف ذاك رحمة من ذي الجلال	ثم تاتينا مكافات المقال
كى ينال العبد مما نالها	ثم يلجننا إلى امثالها

*And our souls, like this breath (of ours) steals away,
Little by little, from the prisons of the world*

*The perfumes of our (good) words ascend even unto Him,
Ascending from us whither God knoweth.*

Our breaths soar up with the choice (words),

¹. Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddin Rūmī*, Book 1, Part 1, line 4, p. 7. [Trans.]

*As a gift from us, to the abode of everlastingness;
 Then comes to us the recompense of our speech,
 A double (recompense) thereof, as a mercy from (God) the Glorious;
 Then He causes us to utter good words like those (already uttered),
 That His servant may obtain (something more) of what he has obtained¹*

Question 19

Can it be said that in the call of the prophets and religions with divine origin, in general, and the religion of Islam, in particular, although benefiting from the world and nature is not prohibited, no emphasis can be seen on stimulating and encouraging the people to maximize benefiting from the world and the bounties of nature?

Answer: The overall context of the divine religion conveyed by Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) ('a) and perfected in the mission of the Prophet of Islam (s) has given so much importance to the lives of people in the world that blindness in this world is deemed tantamount to blindness in the Hereafter. In this regard, the Holy Qur'ān states, thus:

﴿وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى﴾
“But whoever has been blind in this [world] will be blind in the Hereafter.”²

The Qur'ānic verses that command research and study of the universe as divine signs, do not mean that we have to obtain some academic degrees and be delighted with having them. Instead, in this world the personality of a person must come to fruition, and this coming to fruition is the synthesis or product of science, knowledge and deployment of the “human I” in the objective world, without which it is impossible to benefit from the world for the rational life. In reply to the current question, we shall point to some Qur'ānic verses and traditions pertaining to exertion of efforts for life in this world. In another verse of the Holy Qur'ān, it is thus stated:

﴿وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تُنْسِ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا﴾
“By the means of what Allah has given you, seek the abode of the

¹ *Ibid.*, Part 41, lines 881-885, p. 95. [Trans.]

² *Sūrat al-Isrā' (or Banī Isrā' īl)* 17:72. [Trans.]

Hereafter, while not forgetting your share of this world.”¹

In this noble verse, organizing life in this world is not considered unlawful. In fact, it has an extremely subtle point on the merit of life in this world and the means of livelihood as a launch pad for the eternal life. Keeping this in view, the reproached and blameworthy kind of life in this world is that which plunges man into materialism, thus depriving him of the life worthy of the connection with God—“*My life and my death are all for the sake of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds.*”² Another point regarding this verse is that even this worldly life does not bar one from enjoying its pleasures and benefits as long as they do not turn his “rational life” into an animalistic one.

﴿فَلْ مَنْ حَرَمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالْأَطْيَابَ مِنَ الرَّزْقِ﴾

“Say, ‘Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of [His] provision?’”³

One of the reasons behind the mission of the prophets (‘a) is the regulation of the people’s material aspects of life.⁴

Abū'l-Bakhtarī narrated that the Holy Prophet (ṣ) thus said while supplicating:

اللَّهُمَّ بارك لِنَا فِي الْخَبِيزِ . فِإِنَّهُ لَوْلَا الْخَبِيزَ مَا صَلَّيْنَا وَلَا أَدْنَى فِرَائِصَ رَبَّنَا .

“*O Allah! Bless our bread. (That is to say, economically organize our life in this world.) For without bread, neither can we say our prayers, observe fasting nor act upon the commands of our Lord.*”⁵

Imām al-Ṣādiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

لَيْسَ مَنْ تَرَكَ دُنْيَاهُ لِآخِرَتِهِ وَلَا آخِرَتِهِ لِدُنْيَاهُ .

“*He is not from among us, whoever abandons his world for the Hereafter and his Hereafter for this world.*”⁶

It is narrated that Imām al-Bāqir (‘a) said:

¹. *Sūrat al-Qasas* 28:77.

². *Sūrat al-An ‘ām* 6:162. [Trans.]

³. *Sūrat al-A ‘rāf* 7:32.

⁴. See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 1.

⁵. *Al-Furū’ Min al-Kāfi*, vol. 5, p. 73.

⁶. Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, *Man Lā Yahdūruh al-Faqīh*, p. 353.

إني اجدنى امقت الرجل يتعذر عليه المكافحة فيتلقى على قفاه ويقول اللهم ارزقني ويدع أن ينتشر في الأرض ويتمس من فضل الله والذرة تخرج من حجرها تلمس رزقها.

*"I see myself an enemy of the person for whom it is difficult to strive in life, and he lies on his back and says, 'O Allah! Give me provision and let it be spread on the ground to seek the grace of Allah,' while the ant comes out of its hole to look for provision."*¹

Imam al-Bāqir ('a) has also said:

إني لأبغض الرجل أن يكون كسلانا عن أمر دنياه ومن كسل عن أمر دنياه فهو عن أمر آخرته لا كسل.

*"Indeed I hate the person who is indisposed in his worldly affairs, and whoever is indisposed in the worldly affairs is [more] indisposed in the otherworldly affairs."*²

[The following traditions are also recorded in the corpus of *hadīth*:]

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم: إن الله لا يحب الفارغ الصحيح لا في عمل الدنيا ولا في عمل الآخرة.

*"The Apostle of Allah (s) said: 'Indeed Allah does not like the one who is idle both in the worldly and otherworldly matters.'*³

روي عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم: لو قامت القيمة وفي يد أحدكم فيلة (صغار التخل) فإن استطاع أن لا يقوم حتى يغرسها فليفعل.

*"The Apostle of Allah is reported to have said: 'If the Day of Judgment is to come and there is a date-palm sapling in the hand of one of you, if he could be able not to rise up unless he plants it, he must do so.'*⁴

In conclusion, the definite requisite of the Qur'anic verses and traditions that show the need to preserve the dignity and honor of the Muslims is to strive hard for the mundane affairs. This is because with the startling utilization of the tools for domination, exploitation and slavery, the abjectness and humiliation of the societies that neglect organizing their worldly affairs are certain. The same God who defends such life in this world says:

¹. *Ibid.*, p. 363.

². *Furū' Min al-Kāfi*, vol. 5, p. 85.

³. *Al-Barakah fi Fadl al-Sahi wa 'l-Harakah – Al-Waṣibī al-Habashī*, p. 3.

⁴. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

﴿وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُم مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ﴾

“Prepare against them whatever you can of [military] power.”¹

The same criterion for the defense of dignity and honor has given the order for the strongest physical defense.

What is more explicit than the said criterion is the following verse:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَالِبِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا فِيمَ كُنْنُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعِفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً فَنَهَا جَرُوا فِيهَا فَأَوْلَئِكَ مَا وَاهِمُ جَهَنَّمُ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا﴾

“Indeed those whom the angels take away while they are wronging themselves, they ask, ‘What state were you in?’ They reply, ‘We were abased in the land.’ They say, ‘Was not Allah’s earth vast enough so that you might migrate in it?’ The refuge of such shall be hell, and it is an evil destination.”²

If you scrutinize the contents of the blessed order of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) to Mālik al-Ashtar³ and his instructions to other government officials, we will definitely see that there has been no exact, necessary and sufficient program for accurately organizing the “rational life” of human societies, similar to those orders and instructions.

What is to be borne in mind is that the life in this world is a very meaningful passageway for the eternal life in the presence of the Absolute Perfection, Almighty Allah. For this reason, all positive human potential through sincere efforts and struggle in man’s relationship with himself are ordered in what is called ‘utmost efforts’ (described as sa‘ī, kabad, kadah, and competition to do good deeds):

این تقاضاهای کار از بهر آن شد موکل تا شود سرت عیان
These demands (cravings) for action were appointed in order that Your inward consciousness should come clearly into (outward) view.⁴

All the emphasis and orders to know the universe, and to know one’s self, are generally not meant to make the human mind a mirror reflecting all the

¹ *Sūrat al-Anfāl* 8:60.

² *Sūrat al-Nisā'* 4:97.

³ See *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 53. [Trans.]

⁴ Nicholson, *The Mathnawī of Jalāluddin Rūmī*, Book 2, Part 23, line 997, p. 107. [Trans.]

components of the universe and man, or to perceive the Divine Attributes of Beauty and Glory. Instead, they mean benefiting from the universe and knowing man in general as well as in relation with God, which will definitely be impossible without self-edification, honoring of man and humanity, acquisition of skills and knowledge of the world of nature. In general, we must accept that the perfection of man can only be attained by means of knowing and purifying the self through sublime human values, knowing the universe and benefiting from its various dimensions, levels and realities, to harmonize the inner world with the outer world along the path of stimulating one's total existence and potential asset.

Question 20

Kindly state briefly the general and common viewpoints and concepts of Islam and other religions, along with the exclusive viewpoints of Islam.

Answer: In order to identify the general and common concepts of Islam and other religions, we must first consider the types of religion:

1. The religions prior to the Abrahamic Faith;
2. The religions with unclear beliefs on the Origin (*mabda'*) and Resurrection (*ma'ād*), such as Buddhism;
3. The Abrahamic religions presently constituted by Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Of course, it is possible that the Sabians and Zoroastrians are also among the followers of Prophet Ibrāhīm ('a);
4. Sects and denominations such as Protestantism (from Catholic Christianity) and similar groups;
5. Regional religions such as Shintoism in Japan and Confucianism in China);
6. Deviant schools, which do not have real religious roots but have been given religious color from the beginning or later on.
7. Nonreligious schools with various labels, one of which claims to be championing humanity, called "humanism", asserting that given the human principles it upholds, it can respond to all the needs and concerns of humankind. Other forms also exist and focus more on the political, legal and economic dimension of people.

Alongside these schools of thought, there are diverse views on the different elements of human life and to distinguish them from one another is worthwhile. Some of these views and perspectives are as follows:

1. The school of “adherent” (customary, conventional) law and “advanced” law
2. The economic schools of individualism and collectivism
3. Political systems such as democracy and republicanism in various shades, oligarchy, constitutional monarchy, totalitarianism, and the like

Now, we shall embark on stating the general and common viewpoints and concepts of Islam and other religions and schools of thought. As the Islamic school of thought is a religious school, naturally its belief in the Origin (*mabda'*) and the Resurrection (*ma'ād*), i.e. God and eternity, and management of the “rational life” of people through the guidance revealed by God, the Glorious, which has been conveyed by the prophets to His servants, is common to every religious school. From the historical perspective, we only come to know of the beliefs of the religions prior to the Abrahamic Faith through the Islamic sacred scripture (the Qur'ān) because apart from the Qur'ān, there is no access to a reliable source about the basic tenets and beliefs of religions. The Noble Qur'ān states:

﴿شَرَعَ لَكُم مِّنَ الْدِينِ مَا وَصَّى بِهِ نُوحًا وَالذِي أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ وَمَا وَصَّيْنَا بِهِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى أَكْثَرٌ أَقِيمُوا الدِّينَ وَلَا تَتَفَرَّقُوا فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ عَلَى الْمُسْرِكِينَ مَا تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَيْهِ﴾

“He has prescribed for you the religion which He had enjoined upon Noah and which We have [also] revealed to you, and which We had enjoined upon Abraham, Moses and Jesus, declaring, ‘Maintain the religion, and do not be divided in it.’ Hard on the polytheists is that to which you summon them.”¹

From this and similar Qur'ānic verses, it is clear that there have been general and common beliefs and concepts in the divine religion in all periods and places although there might have been differences in details and secondary issues according to temporal and spatial factors:

﴿وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنِسَّكًا﴾

“For every nation We have appointed a rite.”²

¹ *Sūrat al-Shūrā* 42:13.

² *Sūrat al-Hajj* 22:34. [Trans.]

The Abrahamic Faith which is the origin of all subsequent religions is the same natural religion (*religio naturalis*). In some verses of the Qur’ān, God, the Glorious, has referred to the same faith or way of Abraham (‘a). In one Qur’ānic verse, God, the Exalted, says:

﴿مَا كَانَ أَبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَسِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ﴾
“Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian. Rather he was a hanīf (monotheist), a muslim.”¹

That is, Prophet Ibrāhīm (‘a) was the conveyor of the universal message of the divine religion, which is the same Islam. We brought the different sects into being later. All the prophets that came afterward, such as Prophet Mūsā (Moses), Prophet ‘Isā (Jesus) and the Seal of the Prophets (‘a) propagated the same Abrahamic Faith with slight temporal variations. It is stated in another verse, thus:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَى مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾
“Indeed the faithful, the Jews, the Sabaeans, and the Christians—those who have faith in Allah and the Last Day and act righteously—they will have no fear, nor will they grieve.”²

From this and similar verses, it becomes very clear that the original substance of the religion of Prophet Abraham (‘a) has universal views and concepts which are common to all religions with divine origin, both prior and after him.

The reliable source that can prove and explain those universal views and common concepts in the Abrahamic Faith—as we have mentioned above—is the Noble Qur’ān. There are many Qur’ānic verses about the Great Prophet’s (ṣ) possession of traits, which show his possession of those universal views and common concepts.

The traits possessed by Prophet Abraham (‘a) of having faith and belief in the eternal principles of the universal religion and acting upon the rights and duties promulgated by the said religion can be indicative of the principles and secondary tenets of this eternal school of thought. In our view, most of these traits are as follows:

¹ *Sūrat al-‘Imrān* 3:67.

² *Sūrat al-Mā’idah* 5:69.

1. Truthful and doer of good (*Sūrat Maryam* 19:41);
2. The Imām [of mankind] (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:124);
3. Successful in passing a difficult trial (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:124);
4. Purifier of the House of God (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:125);
5. Faithful to Islam (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:131);
6. One who returns to God (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:128);
7. Teaches the Book and Wisdom (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:129);
8. Undergoes refinement and purification of the soul (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:129);
9. Chosen one and one of the righteous (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:130);
10. Endowed with rectitude (*rushd*) (*Sūrat al-Anbiyā'* 21:51) and upholder of the creed of rectitude and perfection (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:130). This quality can be inferred from this line: “*And who will [ever] renounce Abraham’s creed except one who fools himself?*”;
11. Real monotheist;
12. A *hanīf*, i.e. someone who possesses a moderate and natural religion free from any exaggeration or deficiency (*Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:135);
13. Friend of Allah (*khalīl Allāh*) (*Sūrat al-Nisā'* 4:125);
14. Struggler in the way of *tawhīd* even against his nearest of kin (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:74);
15. Possessor of insight into the dominions of the heavens and the earth (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:75);
16. Attained a high level of certitude (*yaqīn*) (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:75);
17. Upholder of sound rational argument (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:76-79);
18. Seeker of his own basis for [the existence of] God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:76-79);
19. Monotheist and shunned polytheism (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:76-79);
20. Guided by Allah *Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:8-83);
21. Wayfarer and presenter of the path of safety (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:8-83);

22. Attained the highest level of rectitude in God and along the path of His Axis (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:162);
23. Guided to the Straight Path (*Sūrat al-An‘ām* 6:161);
24. Possessor and propagator of the same religion conveyed to other prophets such as Nūh (Noah), Mūsā (Moses), ‘Isā (Jesus) and Muḥammad (‘a) (*Sūrat al-Shūrā* 42:13; *Sūrat al-Sāffāt* 37:83);
25. Patient;
26. Suppliant;
27. Penitent before Allah (*Sūrat Hūd* 11:75);
28. Affectionate, sympathetic and concerned with the servants of God (*Sūrat Ibrāhīm* 14:36);
29. Worshipper;
30. Thankful to Allah (*Sūrat al-Nahl* 16:120-121);
31. Professed an easy and moderate religion (*Sūrat al-Hajj* 22:78);
32. Leader;
33. Exponent of the Truth;
34. One of the inheritors of the Heaven (*Sūrat al-Shu‘arā’* 26:78-89);
35. Reliant on God; and
36. Shunned and disavowed the corrupt people (*Sūrat al-Mumtahanah* 60:4);

Taking into account the realities and requisites of the abovementioned qualities, we arrive at this very important conclusion that the framework of the divine religion that made Prophet Abraham (‘a) attain those qualities is perfectly rational and natural, consistent with and stimulant of positive human potential.

Nowadays, an essential and sufficient study or research on the universal views and concepts common to all Abrahamic religions can lead us, all followers of Patriarch Abraham, to a very essential and completely beneficial sense of harmony, although, unfortunately, some existing factors stand in the way of this harmony and coexistence. The first mouthpiece of this unity and harmony in universal views and common concepts is Islam as expressed in this Qur’ānic verse:

﴿فُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابُ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٌ بَيْنَنَا وَبِئْنُوكُمْ أَنَّا نَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذُ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مَّنْ ذُو نِعْمَةٍ فَإِنْ تَوَلُّوْا فَقُولُوا أَشْهِدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

“Say, ‘O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allah, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that we will not take each other as lords besides Allah.’ But if they turn away, say, ‘Be witnesses that we are muslims.’”¹

This word *sawā’* (common) which is the greatest factor for unity of the fundamental principles is the best proof that the religion of Islam does not stand in the way of the unity and harmony among the Abrahamic religions; in fact, it is its mouthpiece and standardbearer. Indeed, this noble verse clearly proves that the Abrahamic Faith can justify or eliminate the differences resulting from peculiarities of each of the Abrahamic religions believed in and practiced by their followers.

Question 21

How can Islam be interpreted considering the differences in the finality (*khātamīyyah*) of Islam? Sir, kindly share your views on this.

Answer: The teachings of Islam are based upon man’s infinite potential for perfection. Islam has set forth the factors of man’s prosperity in this world and felicity in the Hereafter. The clearest proof of this claim is that the ideological principles, laws, and jurisprudential, legal, moral, political, economic, and cultural duties of this religion have been laid down in such a way that up to now, thousands of people have reached the height of perfection. The exception will be when human nature is extinguished and all man’s mundane and spiritual principles cease to exist. Of course, in this case, Islam cannot give any answer to the problems of man, not because it is deficient, but because of the extinction of man and humanity from the page of existence.

Now, in explaining and proving this fact, we must take into account the Holy Prophet (s), Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Tālib and other Imāms, and thousands of personages that attained rectitude such as Salmān al-Fārsī, Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, Mālik al-Ashtar, Uways al-Qarnī, ‘Ammār ibn Yāsīr, Miqdād ibn Aswad al-Kindī, ‘Amr ibn Khazā’ī, Hujr ibn ‘Udayy, and the like. Would there be any chance for these men of rectitude not to have the Islamic principles and rules for knowing how to organize the four basic types of

¹. *Sūrat al-‘Imrān* 3:64.

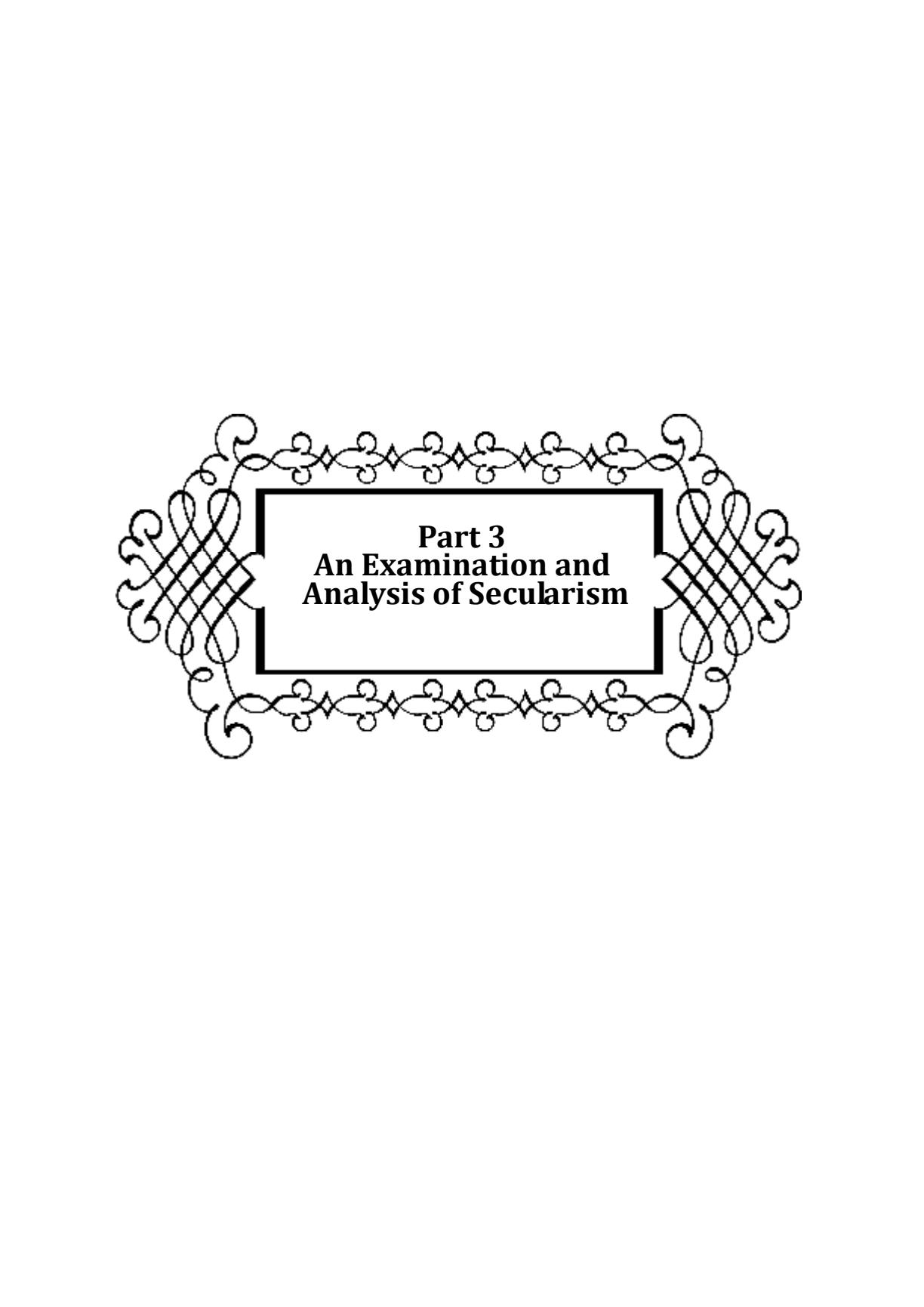
relationship? Islam has presented in human history the likes of Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, Abū Rayhān al-Bīrūnī, Ḥasan ibn Ḥaytham, ‘Attār, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlawī (Rūmī), Mīr Dāmād, Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn, Kulaynī,¹ Ṣadūq,² ‘Allāmah Ḥillī,³ and thousands of similar personalities. Obviously, it cannot be imagined that the nature of man be totally changed individually or collectively. And such men of rectitude would be incapable of living with such conditions. Human society is formed by individuals whose potential can be activated from within themselves. Today, a sublime system of universal human rights is being presented to human society on the basis of the texts and rules taken from Divine scriptures and revelations. If man abandons his selfishness and animalistic tendencies and keeps away from hedonism and profiteering, he will advance with these universal rights competing in goodness and perfection. The advancement of humanity along the path of perfection does not hinge on the astounding technological progress, but on lofty human morality. Thus man, by acquiring the “morality of Allah” (akhlāq Allāh) and the “etiquettes of Allah” (ādāb Allāh), will acquire the quality of “advancement” and make purposeful rational life attainable.

This same divine religion, whose basic principles were conveyed by the great prophets in the past conforming with the primary levels of culture of those periods, came into being and Islam fostered the ability of preserving its ideological principles and all the individual and social laws pertaining to man. Given these conditions, God, the Glorious, has revealed in toto the scripture of the eternal religion on His chosen beloved, Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā (ṣ).

¹ Shaykh Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 329 AH/941 CE): the compiler of *Al-Kāfi* or more fully, *Al-Kāfi fi l-Hadīth*, one of the most important Shī‘ah collections of *hadīth*, divided into three sections: *Uṣūl al-Kāfi*, *Furū‘ al-Kāfi* and *Rawḍah al-Kāfi* consisting of 34 books, 326 sections, and over 16,000 *ahādīth* that can be traced back to the Prophet and his family by an unbroken chain of transmission. [Trans.]

² Shaykh al-Ṣadūq: also known as Ibn Babūyah, one of the most important of the early Shī‘ah scholars who died in 381 AH/991 CE. For his short biography and works, see the introduction of Shaykh aṣ-Ṣadūq, *I’tiqādātu ‘l-Imāmiyyah: A Shī‘ite Creed*, 3rd Ed., trans. Asaf A. A. Fyzee (Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, 1999), pp. 6-23. [Trans.]

³ ‘Allāmah Ḥillī, more fully ‘Allāmah ibn al-Mutahhar al-Ḥillī (1250-1325): one of the prominent Shī‘ah scholars who lived in the period of Mongol domination of Iran. [Trans.]



Part 3
An Examination and
Analysis of Secularism

Chapter 1 ***Secularism and Proclivity to It***

Definitions of Secularism, Atheism and Laicism¹

Secularism means opposition to religious laws and subjects; the spirit of worldliness; advocacy of mundane and customary principles. The root-word “secular” is related to the world, non-spiritual, nonreligious, laic, illiterate, outside the monastery, against religious laws, and making affairs worldly. Secularization means to make something worldly or nonreligious; to be free from the constraint of clergy and priesthood; universalization of ownership; prioritization of non-spiritual matters; to be outside the ecclesiastical domain; worldliness; materialism; giving worldly dimension to clerical beliefs or position.²

There are two other terms which we shall deal here so as to complete the discussion:

1. *Laicism*. It is derived from *laic*. It means attachment to someone worldly and nonreligious; exit from the clerical class; materialist; someone who is outside the clerical class; mundane; someone who is not a member of the clergy; separation of church and state.³

According to the definition given by *Encyclopedia Britannica*, laicism is a case or manifestation of secularism because separation of church and state is specific to secularism which, in turn, includes laicism. These two ways of thinking totally negate religion; in fact, they separate it from the affairs and facets of worldly life, politics in particular.

2. *Atheism*. It means denial of the existence of God; disbelief in the existence of a creator. Atheist means heretic.⁴ Since this way of thinking does not recognize [the existence of] God, it totally denies religion, considering it something unrealistic. Of course, it may possibly utilize it as a tool or means to advance its goals; it is the same Machiavelian principle that strips politics of morality.

¹. See āryānpūr Kāshānī, *Farhang-e Kāmil-e Inglīsī-Fārsī*, root-word of “secu,” p. 378; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, root-word of “ath”.

². āryānpūr Kāshānī, *Farhang-e Kāmil-e Inglīsī-Fārsī*, root-word of “ath”.

³. *Ibid.*, root-word of “lai,” p. 2795; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, root-word of “lai”.

⁴. *Ibid.*

Secularism entered the arena of political thoughts in the 14th and 15th centuries as a result of the contradiction between the Church's socio-political ways and methods in the West. Such a contradiction between religion and politics is impossible in Islam because religious beliefs, politics, science, economics, jurisprudence, law, culture, arts, morality, and the like are integral parts of the truth in Islam.

Is Secularism Innate in the Political Philosophy of Aristotle?

Some political philosophy historians have ascribed secularism to Aristotle,¹ which is not true at all. It is said:

“Another point neglected and not given attention to, by the two philosophers (Dante² and Thomas Aquinas³), is that they downplayed the gravity of the menace of secularism, i.e. worldliness and materialism, which is contained in the political book of Aristotle, especially the issues that emanate from the hypothesis he advanced: ‘Civil society is in its perfect and independent form by itself, and it does not need any purification and permit from any supernatural element.’”⁴

Firstly, such a point with the said meaning cannot be inferred from Aristotle.

Secondly, Aristotle's original theory is as follows:

¹. Aristotle (384-322 BCE): a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great. He wrote on many subjects, including physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, biology, and zoology. Together with Plato and Socrates (Plato's teacher), Aristotle is one of the most important founding figures in Western philosophy. [Trans.]

². Durante degli Alighieri (circa 1265-1321), commonly known as Dante: a major Italian poet of the Middle Ages, whose *Divine Comedy*, originally called *Commedia* and later called *Divina* by Boccaccio, is considered the greatest literary work composed in the Italian language and a masterpiece of world literature. [Trans.]

³. Thomas Aquinas, also Thomas of Aquin or Aquino (1225-74): an Italian Dominican priest of the Catholic Church, and an immensely influential philosopher and theologian in the tradition of scholasticism, known as Doctor Angelicus, Doctor Communis, or Doctor Universalis. [Trans.]

⁴. Bahā'ud-Dīn Pāzīrgān, *Tārīkh-e Falsafeh-ye Siyāsī*, vol. 1, p. 360. As we will see, the words of Aristotle are as follows: “Nature draws man to the political community through his instincts.” Aristotle, *Politics* (or *A Treatise on Government*), translated from Greek into French by Bartolome Santhiler and into Arabic by Ahmad Luṭfi Sayyid, Book 1, chap. 13.

“He who proposes to make that inquiry which is necessary concerning what government is best, ought first to determine what manner of living is most eligible... What is good, relative to man, may be divided into three sorts, what is external, what appertains to the body, and what to the soul. It is evident that all these must conspire to make a man happy: for no one would say that a man was happy who had no fortitude, no temperance, no justice, no prudence; but was afraid of the flies that flew round him: nor would abstain from the meanest theft if he was either hungry or dry, or would murder his dearest friend for a farthing; and also was, in every particular, as wanting in his understanding as an infant or an idiot. These truths are so evident that all must agree to them; though some may dispute about the quantity and the degree: for they may think, that a very little virtue is sufficient for happiness. (Not only he thinks that the least virtue is sufficient for him but he also sometimes believes that his virtue is more than those of others.)”¹

After proving that happiness encompasses the three types of goodness Aristotle embarked on proving that the good pertaining to the human soul is superior and more important than the other two, and it is this good that can materialize human happiness. Aristotle thus said:

“If the soul is more noble than any outward possession, as the body, both in itself and with respect to us, it must be admitted of course that the best accidents of each must follow the same analogy. Besides, it is for the sake of the soul that these things are desirable; and it is on this account that wise men should desire them, not the soul for them. Let us therefore be well assured, that every one enjoys as much happiness as he possesses virtue and wisdom, and acts according to their dictates; since for this we have the example of God Himself, who is completely happy,² not from any external good; but in Himself, and because such is His nature... every good which depends not on the mind is owing to chance or fortune; but it is not from fortune that any one is wise and just: hence it follows, that that city is happiest which

¹. Aristotle, *A Treatise on Government*, trans. William Elis (London and Toronto: JM Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1912) Book 7, chap. 1,

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6762/6762-h/6762-h.htm#2HCH0080>. [Trans.]

². Happiness in relation to God refers to His majesty.

is the best and acts best: for no one can do well who acts not well; nor can the deeds either of man or city be praiseworthy without virtue and wisdom; for whatsoever is just, or wise, or prudent in a man, the same things are just, wise, and prudent in a city.”¹

Obviously, virtue, wisdom and justice—especially in view of Aristotle’s referral to God (as these attributes are in the Essence of God)—cannot be of natural earthly matters which exist based upon instincts and nature. As such, the state, government or political system cannot eliminate religion from the mundane life. Aristotle continued, thus:

“It is possible that this noble life with virtue and wisdom (i.e. happy) is beyond what can man endure, or at least the human being that leads such a life is not due to his common nature but because he exists in a sacred truth and this sacred principle is so great that the activity of this principle of happiness increases. Now, if perception is something sacred, it follows that the happiest life is the life of perception.”²

Definitely, what Aristotle meant, keeping in view of his other points, is not mere perception (understanding) but wisdom as well, whose salient feature, among others, is the possession of virtue. Particularly, by considering this explicit line, “Sacred happiness is not possible except through perpetual perception,”³ it is clear that mere conception of eternity in its abstract form is not real happiness. Instead, real happiness is the perception and realization of eternity by being in the Threshold of Absolute Eternal Perfection beyond eternity. Aristotle said, thus:

“Happiness is not a product of accident; rather, happiness is something given by God and the fruit of sweat and toil. This point is also a subject of discussion: is happiness real, or is it materialized through learning and training? Is it attained through certain habits? Or, is it possible to achieve through other similar ways? Is it true that happiness is something given by God, or something accidental? In

¹ *A Treatise on Government*, Book 7, chap. 1,

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6762/6762-h/6762-h.htm#2HCH0080>. [Trans.]

² No reference is given for this passage. [Trans.]

³ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Bartolome Santhiler (?), “Translator’s Introduction,” p. 96.

reality, if there is something given by God¹ to the human beings in this world, we may dogmatically believe that happiness is a divine blessing. And man would easily accept this belief because for him there is nothing greater than happiness.”²

In view of this passage, ascribing secularism to Aristotle has no factual basis at all. What he stated in *Politics*, “Nature draws man toward the sociopolitical life through his instincts”, (Book 1, chap. 1, para. 13) does not contradict man’s necessity to acquire happiness and excellence individually and collectively through the instrumentality of the state and politics. The above expression attributes man’s political tendency to his nature, while identity, management and political goal, which he considers pertaining to the subsequent expression “happiness”, are not mentioned in the above expression.

Meanwhile, man’s necessity to acquire happiness and excellence has been pointed out by Aristotle in his *Politics* as well as *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the political history of human society, instead of taking out religion from governance, theocratic rule has been discussed. In dictionaries and encyclopedia, theocracy means “divine rule; God-centeredness; religious state-government in which God is the Sovereign; belief in the necessity of divine rule; administration of a country according to religious laws, etc.”³

In order to understand the narrative and conflict between the Church and the State as well as political phenomena such as theocracy (divine rule) and secularism (removal of religion from the temporal and political life), we need to make a brief survey of this conflict.

A Glance at the Conflict between the Church and the State

Regarding the Church and the State, it is thus written in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

“The bone of contention is that each of the two legal institutions (the

¹ Here, “gods” is the exact word of Aristotle and by comparing similar passages, it become clear that by “gods” Aristotle and his likes meant beings with divine sanctity such as the angels, prophets and even righteous rulers. It is the same word used by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *The Social Contract*, page 81: “Based on what has been said, only the gods can bring an ideal law for the people.”

² Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 1, chap. 7, p. 204.

³ Dr. ‘Abbās āryānpūr Kāshīnī, *Farhang-e Kāmil-e Inglsī-Fārsī*, vol. 5, p. 5723.

Church and the State) commanded loyalty and obedience of the people in the same society among the same individuals. Theoretically, the precept of “Give unto Ceasar what is Ceasar’s and unto God what is God’s” (Matthew 21:22) was supposed to have been followed, but in practice, the respective scopes of sovereignty of the temporal and ecclesiastical powers clashed.

“In primitive societies, this distinction between the religious and temporal aspects of social life, as is prevalent nowadays, had been practically impossible. In early civilizations everywhere, the king or the ruler had been regarded as the representative of the divine (divine-heavenly powers). Until the time of the acceptance of Christianity by the Roman Emperor, the person of the emperor had also the highest religious authority, controlling religion and the state. In fact, the emperor also used to be the object of worship as “the god on the surface of the earth”.

“At any rate, the concepts of “the State” and “the Church” as two separate entities can be discussed when the line of distinction between the secular society and the religious society or societies within the same political sphere can be drawn. It is not correct for us to say that the distinction between the government and religion was brought into being by Christianity, although the main responsibility is shouldered by the said religion. It started with Judaism, for with the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 CE, the Jews no longer possessed an independent political society. From then on, they lived as a Jewish religious minority in the heart of a non-Jewish state. As such, they were forced to think about their membership in religious community and their secular citizenship as two separate matters. When Christianity was founded, for sometime the early Christians were under such conditions and circumstances that they had to live under non-Christian rulers.

“Thus, since the end of Christian persecution, maltreatment and discrimination and the beginning of the period of tolerance initiated by Emperor Constantine the Great in the fourth century, the Christians were confronted with this fundamental question: What must be the nature of relationship (between the Church and the political rule of the emperor whose subjects were the Christians themselves)? There is no doubt that the Christian emperors considered themselves holders of the same station; that is, the station held by the emperor in the ancient

polytheistic Roman thinking, and they were not only protectors of the Church but also its sovereigns...

“From the time of Theodosius I the Great, at the end of the fourth century, Christianity was transformed into the religion of the Roman Empire and polytheism or innovations within Christianity were rejected. Also, the period of fusion of the Church and the State as two faces of a single Christian society ushered in. During this time, the Church enjoyed a sort of religious supervision and political power on all citizens including the political leaders and rulers of society.”¹

It is also written in the same reference, thus:

“The Eastern Christian Orthodox Church refers to the Byzantium or Eastern System which can be defined as ‘Caesaropapism’ (absolute rule of religious scholars or ‘caesar-papists’). The Byzantium emperors regarded themselves as protectors and vanguards of the Church on the authority of God, being authorized to enact laws on ecclesiastical affairs and rules, which would be declared by the Church as an integral part of the religious law. Of course, this does not suggest that the Church would always submit. In reality, this running fight would change according to the extent of power of the religious and political leaders in different periods. However, in view of the fact that some of the emperors would not observe the moral bounds and limits of the Church, gradually the Church kept them aside.

“One of the famous Byzantium experts, Louis Brehier, does not define the Byzantium political system (Eastern Roman Empire, Constantinople) as Caesaropapism but as theocracy in which the emperor enjoys a higher or highest position (though not an exclusive or exceptional position).”²

The Roman Catholic Church

Up to the 11th century, in the West (western part of Christendom) the condition was not so different. Although the Pope claimed spiritual authority over all Christendom, he enjoyed a sense of power which the Patriarchs in Constantinople had not possessed.

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 4, p. 590 as translated by Dr. ‘Abd al-Rahīm Gāwāhī.

² *Ibid.*, p. 591.

The Clash between Kings and Popes

From the 11th century up to the 13th century, an assumption existed, explicitly or implicitly, that clerical power is naturally above temporal power, which can be restrained in the end. Christian clerics had no belief in this theory. It only had a great impact and was at the root of conflicts between the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire. The said theory was usually justified by the following assumption: If the ruler tramples upon Christian moral precepts, he—like any other Christian—must be subject to censors (in the sense of faultfinding, criticism, reproach, and the like) by the Church, and be compelled and coerced by the laymen loyal to the Church. (This is the argument used in relation to the Pope's indirect power in mundane affairs.)

A more extreme premise presented by Pope Boniface VIII¹ was that the powers delegated by Holy Christ ('a) to Saint Peter and other disciples and from them to their successors (priests and popes) include final temporal supremacy simply because spiritual power, on account of its nature or essence, is above temporal power. According to him, Prophet Jesus the Messiah ('a) has granted Saint Peter and his successors two swords (Luke 22:38) that symbolize spiritual and material powers. Accordingly, spiritual power is exercised by the popes, while temporal sword is entrusted to non-clerical individuals who are supposed to utilize it according to the instructions of the papacy.

The Separation of Church and State

Theoretically, perhaps, the most radical view on the separation of religion from politics has been presented by Martin Luther,² who advanced a doctrine called “the Two Kingdoms”.³ His teaching in this regard can be practically

¹ Pope Boniface VIII (c. 1235 – 1303), born Benedetto Gaetani: Pope of the Catholic Church from 1294 to 1303, who, in his Bull of 1302, *Unam Sanctam*, put forward some of the strongest claims to temporal, as well as spiritual, power of any Pope. [Trans.]

² Martin Luther (1483 – 1546): a German priest and professor of theology who initiated the Protestant Reformation. [Trans.]

³ Martin Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms (or two reigns) of God, as set forth in 1580 Book of Concord, maintains that God is the ruler of the whole world and that he rules in two ways. He rules the earthly or left-hand kingdom through secular government, by means of law, and in the heavenly or righthand kingdom through the gospel or grace. [Trans.]

summed up as follows: "The Gospel of God must be within the jurisdiction of the Church while His Law must govern society. If we administer the Church through the law, and society through the Gospel, people will be compelled to bring the law and ordinances into the realm of divine grace and bounty, and feelings and emotions into the domain of [social] justice, thereby, letting God be deprived of His Station of Sovereignty, letting Satan rule by us abiding with the civil order. This turned into a form of official religion in places where the majority was Lutheran such as Germany and the Scandinavian states.

In many places, princes practically assumed the kind of supervision and command which the Roman Catholic Bishops assumed.

John Calvin¹ had made lesser theoretical efforts on the separation of the two realms, i.e. religious and civil. In his opinion, Geneva must turn into a theocracy in which the holy men would rule, and the divinely promised society must be founded on the divine law as revealed in the Sacred Scripture. No parts of social or city life must be so far, secular, or unimportant, to be able to escape from the supervision of the Calvinists.

In the politico-religious history of the non-Islamic East and West, we can see that the meaning of secularism, i.e., the concept of omitting religion from the mundane, political and scientific life, is much clearer than that of theocracy, i.e. the rule of God in society. Basing the management and justification of individual and collective life on man himself is an unambiguous concept not difficult to understand. The concept of divine sovereignty in society is ambiguous because of possible interpretations. We shall mention here two important possibilities on the abovementioned concept:

The first possibility is that all political, scientific, cultural, economic, and legal figures of society are directly informed of the reality by Almighty God, through divine revelation or inspiration. This possibility is incorrect because, firstly, it has not been established that the prominent figures of society (with the exception of the known prophets) have ever claimed to be recipients of revelation. Secondly, if ever they were receiving revelation pertaining to the management of society, no conflict or clash would ever arise between and among them, whereas, so many conflicts and quarrels among the prominent figures of society can be observed.

¹. John Calvin (1509 – 1564): an influential French theologian and pastor during the Protestant Reformation. [Trans.]

The second possibility is that the political figures of society are so inwardly purified and polished that by the will of God, the Glorious, they can intuitively discern the reality and utilize it in the lives of people. It is clear that in addition to the conflicts, the prominent figures in society commit huge mistakes that cannot be Divine.

Therefore, secularism in a given social form gives rise to a serious conflict among ecclesiastical, political and social figures. All the conflicts and diversity of ideas in the 14th and 15th centuries became manifest and gradually evolved. This intellectual development happened in the course of three famous events, the first of which is discussed in this chapter, while the other two shall be discussed in the next chapter.

Three Events that Paved the Ground for Secular Thinking

The *first event* refers to the dispute between the office of the Pope and the French monarchy from 1269 to 1303 A.D., as the result of which the assumption of papal imperialism, incorporated into the religious law, reached its highest point. But, at the same time, the integration of the French nations, the formation of the French monarchy, and the intensified feeling of nationalism in France dealt it a death blow, after which it could not recover. Opposition of papal imperialism gradually evolved at the end of the said event and its objective identified. This gave rise to the notion that spiritual power must be restrained. This thinking was of immense importance as it raised the question of independence of all monarchies and kingdoms as independent political communities. In reality, it can be said that the seed of nationalism, which flourished in the 18th and 19th centuries, was sown at that time.

The *second event* refers to the dispute between Pope John XXII¹ and the Roman Emperor, Louis IV² of Bavaria, which centered on opposing papal sovereignty, lasted for about 25 years. In this quarrel, initially Guillaume Duckam (?), the spokesman of the orthodox spiritual Franciscans, opened the door of opposition to papal sovereignty, gathering around him and

¹ Pope John XXII (1244 – 1334), born Jacques Duèze (or d'Euse): the pope from 1316 to 1334 and the second Pope of the Avignon Papacy (1309–1377), elected by a conclave in Lyon assembled by Philip V of France. [Trans.]

² Louis IV (1282 – 1347), called the Bavarian of the house of Wittelsbach: the King of Germany (King of the Romans) from 1314, the King of Italy from 1327 and the Holy Roman Emperor from 1328. [Trans.]

guiding all the elements opposing the Pope and Christian tradition. Secondly, Marcel Dupado (?) propounded and developed the assumption of sufficiency of civil society, turning it into a form of secularism connected to God-wariness (*taqwā*) and close to Erastianism, following the belief of Thomas Erastus,¹ that the state must take charge of religious affairs, and that the church must submit to the state. In the course of this quarrel, religious power was restricted, while the exclusive nature of its functions in the otherworldly affairs developed, leaving the Church as an important social institution.

The *third event* refers to the quarrel that took place for the first time within the Church among the clerics. This kind of quarrel was different from the disputes between the religious and temporal powers, and opposition to the absolute power of the Pope in this quarrel took a new form. It was the first time in the history of Christianity that, as reform measures, the subjects and followers of an absolute ruling power strived to impose constitutional limits and representative governance to their master. Of course, this quarrel did not end in favor of the Pope's adversaries, and the party called *Concilia* or "Conciliator" whose platform is conciliation, failed to act upon their platform. It gave way to a political philosophy which led to dialogue and dispute between the temporal leaders and their followers; that is, it also awakened the subjects of political leaders to think of restricting their power through constitutionalism and representative government.²

This was the origin of secularism in the West that introduced religion as opposed to and repugnant to justice, freedom and science. Given these three events, the supposed pioneers of restricting [ecclesiastical authorities] gave an exaggerated account of religion and rendered a blow to humanity. Machiavelli³ intensified this blow. If ever the current of religious life in the hearts of many people in the East and even in the West is cut, there will be no hope for the salvation of mankind from the pangs of death it was experiencing.

¹. Thomas Erastus (1524 – 1583): a Swiss physician and theologian best known for a posthumously published work in which he argued that the sins of Christians should be punished by the state, and not by the church withholding the sacraments. [Trans.]

². Bahā'ud-Dīn Pāsīrgīn, *Tārīkh-e Falsafeh-ye Siyāsī* (*History of Political Philosophy*), vol. 1, pp. 360-361.

³. One of the main founders of modern political science in the West, Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli (1469 – 1527) was an Italian philosopher, humanist, and writer based in Florence during the Renaissance. [Trans.]

O, Almighty God, the All-powerful, the All-wise! How powerful and magnificent is the design of creation You have put to work, and how powerful and magnificent is Your wisdom and will! In spite of all the fatal blows and wounds inflicted on mankind by negating religion, promoting Machiavellianism,¹ and propagating the primacy of power, natural selection and other decisive tools, the geniuses have not been able to dry up the spring of religious life within man!

Those geniuses were so ignorant that they thought of allegedly determining the functions of future mankind, saying that mankind must always move along the way we determine for it! They failed to realize that the infants of the Children of Adam ('a) come to the world with new lives, minds and souls, without these geniuses determining the fate of these neophytes in the garden of creation. As such, if these neophytes are not indoctrinated by atheism and secularism by selfish materialists, they will benefit from all sublime human principles and values.

How we wish they would raise their heads for a few moments and hear their own voice of regret for going to extremes in negating religion.

¹. Deriving from the Italian Renaissance diplomat and writer Niccolò Machiavelli who wrote *Il Principe* (*The Prince*) and other works, Machiavellianism is “the employment of cunning and duplicity in statecraft or in general conduct.” [Trans.]

Chapter 2

The Reason for the Emergence of Secular Thinking in the West

In this discourse, we shall mention some points for those undertaking research:

First point: Did the tyrants that considered themselves above law really believe that science and freedom were opposed to the true divine religion? The reply to the question is definitely in the negative. In view of the Absolute Perfection of the Bestower of religion, His lofty wisdom, and the purpose behind the bestowal of religion to man, we have no option but to believe that the essence of religion is to let all sublime talents strive to achieve God's Axis of Exalted Perfection. Therefore, the glorious mission and sublime purpose of the religion is to let all human beings possess rational thinking, freedom, and dignity, which are inconsistent with narrow-mindedness, compulsion, and lowliness.

As such, if ever oppression, aggression, and promotion of ignorance and darkness took place in the name of religion in human history, it had nothing to do with religion, but originated from the dominance of the egocentrists masquerading as followers of religion. These geniuses would make use of Judaism, Christianity or Islam for their selfish interests. We also use the same argument to defend the lofty concepts of politics, law, economics, ethics, and art from the clutches of the egoists who want us to state all the truths for their own selfish interests. This is because we all know that politics means management of the social life of man along the path of sublime goals. Is it rational for us to say that since Machiavellian politics spilled the blood of millions of innocent people and trampled upon their rights, it follows that politics must be removed from the scene of life?! Did the powerful not abuse their power? They certainly did. If ever by considering the abovementioned words (law, economics, ethics, and art) one would say that these truths can never be misused, he is either uninformed of constant realities in human history, or his spite has reached the point of opposing his inner self.

Second point: In order to prove the point that despotism, tyranny, cruelty, greed for power, and embezzlement have nothing to do with the divine religion (the pure Abrahamic Faith to which Judaism, Christianity and Islam trace their origin), one has to refer to the Torah, the Evangel and the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān, in particular, categorically and unambiguously presents the Abrahamic Faith as opposed to oppression, aggression, despotism, ignorance, and narrow-mindedness. The Noble Qur'ān declares teaching, training, wisdom, and establishment of justice and equity among the people as the goal of the prophets' mission (*bi 'thah*). Such a goal can never be harmonious with the [wicked] attitude exemplified by [self-styled] Muslim and Christian leaders throughout history.

Third point: Nowadays, we must meticulously study the issue of "elimination of religion from the world," which has been posed as a scientific and sociopolitical issue. Is the separation of religion from the sociopolitical aspects and the sheer worldliness of these aspects a natural reality explained by the authoritative thinkers? Or, by considering a number of tangible and intangible factors religion must be distinguished from politics, science, law, economics, art, ethics, and even mysticism?!

One of the strange things in this regard is that those writers who diligently write on the basis of "scientific proofs", are those who, on the one hand, have talked about the distinction between "what is right", and "what should be" on the basis of the Machiavellian method in science! On the other hand, they have paid no attention to all the convincing answers given to them. The same Machiavellian method obliges them to arrive at the "it must be such" (religion must be separated from politics) conclusion because "it is such" (that religion is separate from politics) which is nothing but an illusion!

Fourth point: Now, we shall set aside the past and argue that no matter what happened in the past, today we can observe that the way of thinking and method of "eliminating religion from mundane life" has become prevalent in the West and this thinking has brought about worldly results desired by the people. Can we afford to subscribe to this way of thinking?

The advancement in science and technology and the organized social life of people in the West is not caused by eliminating the pure divine religion from society but by sidelining the religion-innovators who interpret, conform and practice the divine religion according to their carnal desires in order to attain their selfish interests. When the people in the West sidelined religion on the ground of eliminating the obstacles to "rational life", they meant the "religion" artificially made by religious leaders, which was against science, progress, rational freedom, justice, and innate human dignity. This state of affairs is not logical as far as Islam is concerned because it has given to man

one of the two most indigenous civilizations in human history, which would be impossible without science, politics, economics and law.

In the future discussion, we will examine as elaborately as possible the untenable bases of the false notion of “the elimination of religion in mundane life” in Muslim societies.

Fifth point: The factors that contribute to “the elimination of religion in mundane life” in the West are simply erroneous and can never be consistent with the religion of Islam. The difference between Islam and the West lies in the meanings of life and politics (at least in the arena of social life) .

1. The common meaning of life in the present-day West is what exists in the natural world and remains free, based upon selfishness in satisfying natural instincts. which are controlled and molded for the benefit of social life, without specific beliefs which give meaning to life and justify the lofty goal, and without the need of possessing a sublime human character.
2. The common meaning of religion in the present-day West refers to a personal spiritual relationship between man and God and other supernatural truths, without having the least role in man’s mundane life.
3. The common meaning of politics in the present-day West refers to the management of the natural life of the people in the social arena toward the goals apparently chosen by their majority. In this definition of religion and politics, the need for religion in politics and its activity is totally absent because from their perspective, the people have no need at all for religion, whether in individual or social life.

In Islam, the meaning of the three realities is totally different: Human life refers to the activation of aptitudes towards perfection, through conscious searching, for the attainment of sublime goals. Covering each of the stages of life increases the motivation to move on to the next stage. The human being is the forerunner of this search; the being who originates from eternity, whose passageway is this purposeful world, and whose ultimate goal is to have a place in the Axis of Absolute Perfection in eternity. The Absolute Perfection’s breeze of love, grandeur and glory reinvigorates the creatures in the universe and kindles the light of the tortuous path of material and spiritual perfection. The beginning, and end of this life can be traced back to God:

﴿فَإِنْ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“Say, ‘Indeed my prayer and my worship, my life and my death are all for the sake of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds’.”¹

Islam's definition of religion depends on three main pillars: The first pillar refers to the belief in the existence of the One and Only God, His supervision and dominance over the universe, and His absolute justice, which is beyond whims and caprice. He is the embodiment of all Attributes of Perfection, and has created the universe based on His wisdom providing man with two types of original guides (sound intellect and the prophets) to move toward perfection and enter into the Station of Beatific Vision (*liqā’ Allāh*). Another is the belief in eternity, without which life and the entire universe will remain an enigmatic puzzle. These convictions depend on sound intellect and intrinsic perception.

The second pillar refers to the laws and practical program of activity leading man toward the sublime goal of life, which are called laws, duties and rights. It is anchored in two things:

1. Mandatory moral precepts which are prescribed for the acquisition of merits; and
2. Duties and Rights; duties include devotional decrees and personal duties in the arena of sociopolitical life, rights mean an advantage that can be utilized by a person. Meanwhile, decrees are also of two kinds: primary and secondary decrees. The primary decrees relate to the permanent needs while the secondary decrees pertain to the changing sources of welfare and corruption in life.

The third pillar refers to the subjects that include all the realities and phenomena that constitute life. With the exception of a very few cases, in all subjects Islam has given the choice to the people to deal with them with full attention, reflection, physical strength, desires, and legitimate demands.

In Islam, politics means management of human life both in the individual and collective spheres for the attainment of the most sublime material and spiritual goals. The beliefs and practical laws intend to organize and reform humanity with respect to the four types of relationship. From the Islamic perspective, any thing or phenomenon, which can be utilized for the organization and welfare of human life, within the said four types of

¹. *Sūrat al-An ‘ām* 6:162. [Trans.]

relationship, is regarded as an integral part of religion.

The Unity and Harmony of all Aspects of Human Life in Islam

Thus, science, politics, economics, law, ethics, culture in its broad sense, technology, and all things that contribute, in one way or another to the organization and welfare of mankind, are integral parts of the religion of Islam. Whoever does not know this fact definitely does not know the religion. For example, we shall quote here the words of an expert in law and rights:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau¹ said:

“The sacred religion (Christianity) has been always separate from the ruling establishment and its relationship with the state is not compulsory. Prophet Muḥammad has correct views, putting well in order its political apparatus. So long as his form of government was in the hands of the caliphs, it was a religious and temporal government. The religious and temporal government, the legislative and the customary were one and the same that rule the entire state. But as the Arabs got rich, they became lax and other nations overwhelmed them. Then, the dispute between two sources of power started again.”²

Elsewhere, Rousseau also said:

“The Jewish laws which still exist, and the religious law of Muḥammad, a descendant of Ishmael, which is binding in the world for the past ten centuries still gives account of the greatness of the prominent men who have codified it. Selfish philosophers and fanatic and obstinate devotees have brought [the value of] these great men to nowhere, but the real statesman within his rank could see a great inborn disposition which brings about enduring [foundations and] institutions.”³

¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78): a major philosopher, writer, and composer of 18th-century Romanticism, whose political philosophy heavily influenced the French Revolution, as well as the American Revolution and the overall development of modern political, sociological and educational thought. [Trans.]

² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Qarārdād-e Ijtīmā'i* (*The Social Contract*), trans. Ghulām-Ḥusayn Zīrakzādeh, p. 195.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

Chapter 3 ***The Consequences of Secularism***

Two Seemingly Contradictory Views of ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khaldūn on the Need of the Prophets of God for Man’s Mundane Life

On the need of religion for man’s mundane life, ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khaldūn has two seemingly contradictory views, which we have assessed, to some extent, while dealing with the scope of religion. Here, we deem it necessary to point out these two views.

First view: “Existence and human life can materialize without [the existence of prophethood and religious law]...”¹

Second view: In Chapter 51, under the heading “Human Civilization Requires Political Leadership for Its Organization”:

“We have mentioned before in more than one place that human social organization is something necessary. It is the thing meant by “civilization”, which we have been discussing. (People) in any social organization must have someone who exercises a restraining influence and rules them and to whom recourse may be had. His rule over them is sometimes based upon a divinely revealed religious law. They are obliged to submit to it in view of their belief in reward and punishment in the other world, (things that were indicated) by the person who brought them (their religious law). Sometimes, (his rule is based) upon rational politics. People are obliged to submit to it in view of the reward they expect from the ruler after he has become acquainted with what is good for them. The first (type of rule) is useful for this world and for the other world, because the lawgiver knows the ultimate interest of the people... The second (type of rule) is useful only for this world...”²

The final view of Ibn Khaldūn on a life without religion is the same mere physical life concerned only with the material dimension of man and not the

¹ Ibn Khaldūn, *Al-Muqaddimah*, pp. 43-44.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303.

“rational life”, which brings to perfection all dimensions of human life. Thus, we can say that there is no inconsistency in Ibn Khaldūn’s view.

Secularism Leads to Personality Disorder in Human Management

A human being has four basic dimensions:

First Dimension

It consists of the body or physiological limbs and their natural properties like connection with the natural environment, nativity, procreation, and the like.

Second Dimension

It consists of the social mundane life related to the management of man’s collective life such as law, economics, politics, and culture. The exposition of this dimension lies in item 8 of the topic, “An Example of the Principles and Values Undermined or Totally Eliminated after the Elimination of Religion from Human Life”.

Third Dimension

It consists of the psychological or mental activities of man, such as imagination, conceptions, imagery, intellection, thinking, willpower, decision-making, choosing, expressing emotions and feelings, etc.

Fourth Dimension

It consists of man’s perfection-seeking aptitudes, most of which pertain to religion, morality and ideologically sublime truths.

Managing the First Dimension (Animalistic Life)

Man takes charge of the activities related to his animalistic existence as long as he possesses the requisites of management; such as awareness, wellbeing and other capabilities. However, in the absence of those requisites, compelling factors take away management skills from a person. Most activities of the bodily limbs which are repeated many times to meet basic needs for subsistence are such that it seems those limbs unconsciously acquire from the person some sort of capability in managing him. Habitual activities are usually called actions rooted in habits. As such, in cases of rare activities one’s perfect management is undertaken consciously. In managing ones natural existence, one performs his work by considering the motivating needs of the natural limbs.

Managing the Second Dimension (Life with Thematic Principles and Laws)

In the second dimension, a human being is managed in relation to the motive of collective mundane life, beyond his choice, believing that his life must be in harmony with those realities, such as law, economics, politics, and the like. The difference between the first and second dimensions is that his relationship with the second dimension is voluntary, because violation of social laws, such as violation of rights, is more possible than violation of the laws governing the bodily limbs that directly administer man's physical life. For example, opening the eyes while walking is an involuntary actions, whereas, following a legal provision of collective life is very consciously done. In the first dimension of life, man can live like other animals by only following the motives of individual physical life. In the second dimension, however, he takes a position superior than those of other animals.

Man can accept the realities of the second dimension only to provide for his mundane life, harmonizing his life with the pertinent principles and laws and not base any religious and moral values on those realities in following them.

Human Being in the Third Dimension

In managing this dimension, man deals with subtler dimensions, and in which distinguished personalities have a role in justifying those realities. In managing the psychological activities directly related to a person, it requires utmost meticulousness, analysis, synthesis, modification, and decisiveness.

Man's psychological activities include conception, supposition, imagination, discoveries, intuitive knowledge, self-assessment, intellection, thinking, abstraction, management, deciding, exercise of willpower, and feeling. It is clear that none of these activities is accidental to fade away after coming into existence in man's being without any governing law.

These activities can be divided into two main types:

The first type refers to those activities that do not need one's awareness and management skill; for example, conception of the things which we encounter for the first time. If the conceived things are not so important, they will be left alone and in the course of time, they will be gradually erased from the mind.

The second type refers to those activities which can be within the awareness, management and control of a person. Take for example, the following:

1. Embodiment (*tajsīm*): that is, to regard something as not existing and nothing as something that exists, or to regard certain things as different things. The best examples of *tajsīm* are the various shows in theaters and the like, in which the viewers tend to consider the actors, and appearances in the scene to be real and to behave accordingly. For instance, someone plays the role of the late Mīrzā Taqī Khān Amīr Kabīr¹ and other people play the role of his enemies and murderers while all the viewers are certain that the former is not the real Amīr Kabīr and the latter are not his real enemies and murderers. Yet, all these viewers treat what just happened to Amīr Kabīr as something undesirable. This is the power of the imagination.

2. Discovery or disclosure (*iktishāf*): it refers to any phenomenon which cannot be interpreted within the context of scientific rules. In the words of Claude Bernard² on the introduction to [the study of] experimental medicine,

“No specific rule or instruction can be presented which holds that at the time of observing a certain thing by the researcher, a correct and fruitful idea which will serve as a sort of prior guide of the mind on the correct [method of] research would come into being. It is only after the existence or appearance of the idea that one can say how to set it according to the specific instructions of the stated logical rules, which no researcher is allowed to violate. But the reason behind its appearance is unclear and its nature is completely personal and something special, which is regarded as a source of creativity, invention and ingenuity of someone.”³

The overwhelming majority of the authorities in science have accepted the role of intuitive perceptions in the discoveries and inventions, and anyone who possesses such capabilities or, who has actually observed only an instance of them, acknowledges the role of intuition in the discoveries.

¹. Mīrzā Taqī Khān Farāhīnī, better known as Amīr Kabīr (1803-1848): the strong and popular prime minister of Naṣīr al-Dīn Shāh of the Qājār dynasty of Persia, who, by relying on his shrewdness, sagacity and perseverance managed to do away with many aspects of foreign colonialism and domestic autocracy to promote the welfare of the country in the face of many challenging difficulties. [Trans.]

². Claude Bernard (1813 – 1878): a French physiologist who was the first to define the term *milieu intérieur* (now known as homeostasis, a term coined by Walter Bradford Cannon) and one of the first to suggest the use of blind experiments to ensure the objectivity of scientific observations. [Trans.]

³. Felicien Robert Challaye, *Knowing the Scientific Methodology*, p. 42.

3. Knowledge by presence (*'ilm-e hudūrī*) (self-awareness or self-consciousness): This can be experienced by anyone who is self-conscious. In this extraordinary happening, the perceiver is also the perceived, which refers to the “I” or person. In the words of Shaykh Mahmūd Shabistarī, “This situation is similar to the man with eyes who must see himself without the instrumentality of his own eyes!”

عدم آینه عالم عکس و انسان
چو چشم عکس در روی شخص پنهان

تو چشم عکسی و او نور دیده است به دیده دیده را هرگز که دیده است

Absent is the mirror, and the universe is like a reflection.

Someone is hidden in him, like the eye of the reflection.

You are the eye of the reflection, and He is the light of the eyes;

*Who has ever seen that true light with his eyes?*¹

4. Intellection (*ta‘aqqul*): it refers to thinking in the light of the established principles and laws for the attainment of one’s goals in an intellectual activity. It utilizes abstracted generalities for harmonizing different cases and since perception of general cases necessitates perception of abstracted realities, it follows that the person in question also engages in a metaphysical activity in the process.

5. Willpower (*ikhtiyār*): this is one of the most magnificent powers that man possesses to manage life. It is even above the sensible things, which one compares and contrasts. For this reason, he gives a noble form to his work, which is beyond natural outputs in the bodily dimension.

6. Self-assessment and self-examination: anyone with a sound mind can examine and assess his bodily limbs and give preference to one limb over another. Such a person can examine and assess his inward powers, abilities and activities. For example, Are my feelings sound? Is my thinking or intellection correct? Do my psychological activities follow the correct process? Do my faculties and aptitudes harmoniously work together? This examiner is the person himself.

There are people who would say that such examination may be traceable to one of our unknown mental powers and there is reason for the sole existence of the person. This possibility is only correct when a person sets all his

¹. Shaykh Mahmūd Shabistarī, *Golshan-e Rāz*, part 8. [Trans.]

limbs, faculties and aptitudes for qualitative and quantitative comparison with one another, for the assumption is that they—inward and outward—have all been examined.

If we assume that assessment in this regard is related to an unknown mental power who or what is the assessor? Whoever or whatever he or it is, definitely is greater than all the given powers. This refers to the same “I” (human being). This is an example of the proofs that establish the solitude of the “I” (human being). According to some people, the proofs are more than sixty. If we disregard such activities by the sole “I” and say it is natural to “separate religion and politics” in human life, it follows that we have disregarded the incurable pain of self-alienation, which is the illness of the twentieth century. The conclusion of this discussion is that the elimination of religion from the mundane life leaves the human being in the hands of events, which are constantly changing, and negates the primacy and inalterability of religion, which originates from beyond nature.

7. The nobility of “I” over the universe: There is no doubt that by acquiring sublime gnosis, the wary human beings occupy a sort of lofty station of epiphany with which they inwardly perceive the entire universe through knowledge by presence. They can even perceive their existence as part of the whole system of the universe.

The first thinker who has pointed out the basis of the fact that the “I” (human being) is above nature (“sublime isolation”) is Nāṣir Khusrū al-Qubādiyānī.¹ He thus says:

عقل ما بر آسیا کی پاداشا گشتی چنین گرنہ عقل مردمی از کل خویش اجزاستی

8. The human being, in addition to the potential he possesses, has something stable and constant in the midst of changes. If a person has committed suicide even a hundred years ago, he is a criminal and courts of justice in the world shall treat him as such although his physical dimensions have already undergone so many changes. Perhaps the source of primordiality of the self stems from the same element (its essence’s inalterability). That the human being relies on a stable and accepted principle throughout his life in relation to every sort of event, in doing any action and in uttering anything, is related

¹. Abū Mu‘īn Ḥamīd al-Dīn Nāṣir ibn Khusrū al-Qubādiyānī, also referred to as *al-Hujjat* (Proof) (1008-1088): a Persian poet, philosopher, Ismā‘ili scholar, and traveler. [Trans.]

to the same inalterable element. At the same time,

بی خبر از نو شدن اندر بقا	هر نفس نو می شود دنیا و ما
مستمری می نماید در جسد	عمر همچون جوی نونو می رسد

Every moment the world is renewed, and we are unaware of its being renewed, while it remains (the same in appearance).

Life is ever arriving anew, like the stream, though in the body it has the semblance of continuity.¹

That is, although the human being is linked with the changes, he always inclines to stability and inalterable principles.

قرنها بگذشت و این قرن نویست
 ماه آن ماه است و آب آن آب نیست
 عدل آن عدل است و فضل آن فضل هم
 لیک مستبدل شد این قرن و امم
 قرن ها بر قرنها رفت ای همام
 وین معانی بر قرار و بر دوام
 شد مبدل آب این جو چند بار
 عکس ماه و عکس اختر برقرار
 پس بنایش نیست بر آب روان
 بلکه بر اقطار اوچ آسمان

Generations have passed away, and this is a new generation: the moon is the same moon, the water is not the same water.

The justice is the same justice, and the learning is the same learning too; but those generations and peoples have been changed (supplanted by others).

Generations on generations have gone, O sir, but these Ideas (Divine Attributes) are permanent and everlasting.

The water in this channel has been changed many times: the reflexion

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu 'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 1, lines 1144-1145, p. 125. [Trans.]

of the moon and of the stars remains unaltered.

Therefore, its foundation is not in the running water; nay, but in the regions whose breadth is that of Heaven.¹

Limiting the human being and his activities on the changes and transformations of things in the world is tantamount to his extinction.

Human Being in the Fourth Dimension (Rational Life)

The fourth dimension is that of rational life based on human existence. The tendency of these two realities is from a very sublime feature of the “I” (human being). They can be included in the realities related to the third dimension, since the relationship of these two realities with the supernatural is direct and more important than all the isolated features of the individual, however, they treat the two as constituting an independent dimension. We shall mention here some ‘descriptions’ of morality embodied in the thoughts of the authorities, both in the East and the West, throughout the centuries:

1. Morality is the blossoming of the truth within the human being.
2. Morality is the reflection of sound human life and conscience. What is conscience? Conscience is the compass of the ship of a human being in the ocean of existence.
3. Morality is the interpreter of the “rational life” of the human being.
4. Morality is the source of victory of the human being over his animalistic traits.
5. No amount of exhilaration and mirth can equal the exultation and rejoice experienced by a moral person.
6. There is no regret for a decision motivated by sublime human morality.
7. A sense of responsibility based upon activities related to moral virtues is the loftiest feeling that emanates from ones being.
8. Without sublime moral virtues, no community in history is worth studying by people.
9. In knowing a person, there is no sign equal to morality.
10. If we take away sublime morality from the life of the human being, we

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu 'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 6, lines 3175-3179, p. 355. [Trans.]

will then be dealing with a complex dangerous being that calls ‘itself’ ‘human’.

Based upon these descriptions, elimination of sublime morality from the life of the human beings is exactly equal to their needlessness of it and non-existence of that truth (morality). This same truth has made them distinct from animals. No doubt, life “minus religion” (secularism), whose edifice is based upon selfishness limited by the absence of transgressing upon the right of others to live, has no room for constructive personal morality.

Elimination of religion from human life based on secularism necessitates undermining of the unity of “rational life” and “personality”.

Limiting high ideals of human activities to the disjointed and fleeting worldly aspects and eliminating religion from them is exactly like persuading the human being to witness particular tangible things, which are registered in the human mind through sensory perceptions and experiments. If human intellect did not organize and abstract the law from those tangible things, it would be impossible for human beings to discern scientific laws in the universe. With the elimination of religion, human life will lose the ability to present the fundamental laws and methods of a goal-oriented life.

The greatest havoc wrought by eliminating religion from human life is the division of human life and personality into the mundane and spiritual aspects!

It is impossible for “rational life”, whose main root stems from a higher world to end in a lower world or, to be divisible, such that a part of it in this world is under the control of man, administering it according to his inclinations and ideals while providing for the other part as its otherworldly part! One can easily perceive the unity of the life and personality of man in both the worldly and otherworldly realms.

The salient features of secularism and the irreparable losses to the sublime values of humanity caused by the elimination of religion from man’s mundane life

A brief introduction to extremism and dissipation, which have engulfed humanity throughout history, will show that mankind is rarely able to understand both, and if ever it does, it can hardly consciously avoid both extremes. The most serious and destructive extremism committed by man with regard to realities is that which is against his own self. This deviation,

which always leads to the formulation of deviant ideas in other aspects of his life, is going to extremes in assessing his self. We must therefore believe that as long as the root of this precarious deviation remains in his being, it is certain that deviant ideas and inclinations will deprive him of a “rational life” in this world and in the hereafter. In order to elucidate this point, we shall hereby provide examples in this discussion:

1. Man sometimes has extreme views about his own self, regarding it as the universe’s pick of the basket, and sometimes, bringing his self down as more dangerous than a preying beast!¹
2. In the past, “slavery” had been the most fundamental principle of life and the cornerstone of all facets of life, such as law, morality, religion, economy, politics, culture, and others! Nowadays, the concept of “freedom”, which basically means emancipation from all religious and moral bounds, as well as, the other sublime human values has prevailed throughout (the so-called advanced) industrial societies. It is obvious that this extremism is the product of the earlier extremism or vice versa.
3. In the past, to be bound by the laws, duties and rights as well as extremist inclinations in the name of religion put some societies under so much pressure that even a window for free thinking could not be seen. Today, some people in society cannot even tolerate hearing religious expressions!
4. Yesterday, psychology had been regarded as a head without a body and today it is treated as a body without a head. That is, yesterday, human knowledge about his soul plunged him into the halo of abstract notions, and now into physiological, biological and behavioral concepts about which no sufficient investigation has ever been made. As such, psychology deals with all issues except the essence of the personal “I”.
5. Sometimes, extremism reaches a point of maintaining that economy has no importance in the conduct of human life. Another form of extremism propounds that the essence of life and the all-embracing reason behind the development in human life is only economy and nothing else!

¹. What we mean by “sometimes” here includes two ways of going to extremes: (1) at one time, a person or people exaggerate in presenting or assessing a reality while at another time, he or they fall short of doing the same, and (2) a person or people exaggerate in presenting or assessing a reality while at the same time or at another time, another person or other people fall short of presenting or assessing the same reality!

6. Pages of history are replete with these optimistic and pessimistic forms of extremism. It is true that going to extremes in any of the various human dimensions, permeates his other dimensions on account of the strong relationship among them, but in two cases the permeation of both forms of extremism into other dimension has wrought the greatest havoc to man and humanity:

- a. Going to extremes in presenting and appraising the “mind,” “I,” “soul,” and “personality”¹.
- b. Going to extremes on the presentation and appraisal of religion which can cause derangement in knowing the salient features of all basic human values.

Now, we shall cite the salient features of the “separation of religion and politics” approach and its irreparable losses.

Our discussion pertains to the second example and losses, in terms of importance, not inferior to the first case, which is deviant thought on the basic nature of man. We do not know whether the thinkers were aware of the havoc wrought by the entry of secularism into the lives of people—havoc caused by the elimination of basic human values, which led to man’s alienation from the universe, fellow human beings, God, and above all, from himself.

Values being extinguished after their removal from the lives of people²

Exposition of the essence of rational beauties: It is only religion which introduces the outward axis of beauty as a manifestation of Divine Beauty

¹ It can be said that committing the said extreme actions is equal to the deviation on the absolute nature of man.

² What we mean by “being undermined or totally extinguished” is that since the prevalence of the secularist thought along this direction, we have faced most of the sublime fundamental and ideological human concepts and truths. That is, humanities—particularly the literary, artistic and moral culture of societies—deal with the said concepts and truths with much zeal and enthusiasm, but cannot present a convincing proof to substantiate these concepts’ importance and merits. It seems that entire humanity must be grateful to the distinguished thinkers who identify the removal of religion from the root of those ideological truths and sublime human principles as the real cause of inability to prove their importance and merits, courageously voicing out that in interpreting and justifying these truths, their main roots in particular, one must refer to religion.

and advances the inward axis of beauty to acquire a manifestation of Divine Beauty. The outward axis is physical, such as a beautiful bunch of flowers, fountains, moonlight, elegant penmanship, a golden voice, and the azure sky.

The inward axis is real, such as sublime emotions, clemency, benevolence, and egalitarianism. Any person with the said traits possesses rational inward beauty, whose pleasure is more sublime than that acquired from outward manifestations of beauty. In ultimately interpreting the essence and main source of beauty, no view except what we have mentioned is acceptable to the real experts. And it is clear that by removing religion (whose basic foundation is the belief in God) from the equation, we will not have any rational interpretation of beauty. Nizāmī Ganjawī¹ says:

چون رسم حواله شد برسام رستی تو ز جهل و من ز دشنام

1. Justice in its true sense: We know that the meanings of justice are diverse because Divine justice in its actual sense emanates from His infinite wisdom. Legal justice signifies conforming an action or utterance to the prescribed law.

Justice in its moral sense denotes obeying the conscience to follow what is good and avoid wickedness, without relying and expecting any reward, or evading punishment. Justice, in its philosophical sense, connotes a lofty will manifested by the system of the universe. It is true that justice in its moral sense is a very desirable trait and the great sages of both the East and the West have regarded it as one of the factors that contribute to human perfection, but when one analyzes the common conscience, he also perceives the pleasure from doing so. This is because seeking metaphysical pleasure also has an element of selfishness. Thus, it is the brigand for most of the people along the path of perfection. Therefore, justice in its moral sense stems from the common conscience, whose activities have a sublime manifestation and transcend pleasures and sufferings.

2. Personal freedom up to the sublime degree of freewill: Natural life wishes to preserve the human essence, attract sources of pleasure and repel sources of harm. This “natural self” has no work other than selfishly satisfying natural urges, and if a person fails to transcend the “natural self”, even if he

¹. Nizām al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Ilyās ibn Yūsuf ibn Zākī, better known as Nizāmī Ganjawī (1141 – 1209): considered the greatest romantic epic poet in Persian literature. [Trans.]

has the most beautiful outward appearance, he cannot bring the potential of the “sublime I” to fruition. For this reason, all religions with divine origin have emphatic admonitions to transcend the “natural self” to achieve the “sublime I”.

In the words of the Commander of the Faithful ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a),

عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّ مَنْ أَحَبَّ عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِلَيْهِ عَبْدًا أَعَانَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسَهُ.

“O servants of Allah! The best of Allah’s servants in His sight is he who helps Allah with regard to himself (his self-building).”¹

According to the divine perspective, without molding the “sublime I,” a person is an animal, nay, lower than that:

﴿لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَقْفَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَاۚ أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَمِۚ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّۚ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْأَغْنِلُونَ﴾

“They have hearts with which they do not understand, they have eyes with which they do not see, they have ears with which they do not hear. They are like cattle; rather they are more astray. It is they who are the heedless.”²

The basic factor for the elevation of man from the “natural self” to the “sublime human I” is to be situated in the Axis of Absolute Perfection which refers to God, the Exalted. This is because any plus point which is considered the “goal of life” in this world is inferior to the “sublime I”.

The clearest proof of this claim is that if a person evaluates the things he acquires such as wealth, position, impressive mansion, wholesome assets, social status, and even knowledge and artistic talent, he will see that compared to the greatness, and expanse of the “sublime I”, these things are insignificant.

Those who possess “personality” or the “sublime I” know well that before obtaining it, every material and worldly goal seems so attractive. But, once it is obtained he will continue his journey to perfection until he reaches the Axis of Absolute Perfection. This Absolute Perfection refers to God who cannot be limited within the domain of “I”. Mawlānā Rūmī says,

¹ *Ibid.*, Sermon 87.

² *Sūrat al-A’rāf* 7:179.

لطف شیر و انگیین عکس دل است

هر خوشی را آن خوش از دل حاصل است

پس بود دل جوهر و عالم عرض

سایه دل چون بود دل را غرض

The deliciousness of milk and honey is the reflection of the (pure) heart: from that heart the sweetness of every sweet thing is derived.

*Hence the heart is the substance, and the world is the accident: how should the heart's shadow (reflection) be the object of the heart's desire?*¹

Real freedom (beyond the unrestrained liberty which is a product of such fatal formulas as “I want it; therefore it is right!”) is so great that it will save him from the shackles of fleeting worldly inclinations and not allow him to focus on “freedom” as the absolute goal of life. At the same time, it will guide him until he reaches the Axis of Absolute Perfection.

It is through this journey to perfection that a person transcends “freedom” to achieve “freewill”. And, by delivering “freedom” from the domain of material values, and self-centeredness, will transform it into God-centeredness, curb selfishness and turn it into a means of perfection of one’s being. In human history, no influential personality has been able to really render service to humanity without attaining the lofty degree of freewill (doing good deeds and enjoying freedom along the path of goodness and perfection).

3. Self-sacrifice in rendering service to humanity: One of the essential features of secularism is negating any type of self-sacrifice for the welfare of the people in society, particularly those altruistic acts that lead to one’s suffering, persecution and even death. No loftier value can reciprocate this sublime human quality. That soul is great which, for the sake of saving the lives of others or their welfare, prefers to die an honorable death than to live a humiliating life.

4. Noble sense of the unity of humanity: Since the beginning of social life and people’s acquaintance with one another, there has been a noble sense of

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ’ddīn Rūmī*, Book 3, lines 2265-2266, p. 249. [Trans.]

unity among mankind. This feeling exists in every person who is not an egoist. The activities of mundane life are founded on the edifice of egoism and an egoist only considers himself worthy to live; he does not have such a feeling nor even entertain such an idea in his mind.

This claim is based upon an inalterable principle that the stronger the hold of materialism in a person, the more he is susceptible to contradiction and inconsistency. Therefore, attaining harmony and unity of the members of human race as well as transcend materialism is essential. The contents of the couplets below explain the above:

چون ازیشانشان مجتمع بینی دو یار
 هم یکی باشند و هم ششصد هزار بر مثال
 موجها اعدادشان
 در عدد آورده باشد بادشان
 مفترق شد آفتاب جانها
 در درون روزن ابدانها
 چون نظر در قرص داری خود یکیست
 و آنک شد محجوب ابدان در کیست

When you see two of them meet together as friends, they are one, and at the same time, six hundred thousand.

The numbers are in the likeness of waves: the wind will have brought them into number (into plurality from unity).

The Sun, which is the spirit, broke into rays in the windows, which are bodies.

When you gaze on the Sun's disk, it is itself one, but he that is screened by (his perception of) the bodies, is in some doubt.¹

جان گرگان و سگان هر یک جداست / متحد جانهای شیران خداست
The souls of wolves and dogs are separate, every one; the souls of the

¹. *Ibid.*, Book 2, lines 184-187, p. 23. [Trans.]

Lions of God are united.¹

نفرقه در روح حیوانی بود
نفس واحد روح انسانی بود
چون که حق رش علیهم نوره
مفترق هرگز نگردد نور او

Separation (plurality) is in the animal spirit; the human spirit is one essence.

Inasmuch as ‘God sprinkled His light upon them (mankind), (they are essentially one): His light never becomes separated (in reality).²

روح انسانی کنفس واحده است روح حیوانی سفال جامده است
عقل جز از رمز این آگاه نیست واقف این سر بجز الله نیست
عقل را خود با چنین سودا چه کار؟ کر مادر زاد را سُرنا چکار؟

The human soul is like a single body while the animal soul is a solid earthenware.

None is aware of this enigma except the intellect, and none is knowledgeable of this secret except Allah.

What has the intellect to do with such transaction? What does a congenitally blind donkey to do with a cart?³

It can be noticed that Rūmī believes that the intellect, which relies on the sensory perceptions and submits to the “natural self”, is incapable of perceiving the unity of human souls. In order to perceive this sublime reality, a sublime understanding, which can grasp the meaning of “God sprinkled His light upon them (mankind)” (*haqq rashsha ‘alayhim nūrah*) is necessary. Hence, in order to attain such unity and perceive the enjoyment of the bounty of the Divine Light, the sublime immaterial aptitude of man must reach the level of his potential (*fi ‘liyyah*).

¹ *Ibid.*, Book 4, line 414, p. 51. [Trans.]

² *Ibid.*, Book 2, lines 188-189, p. 23. [Trans.]

³ *Mathnawī-e Ma‘nawī*, Book 2, lines 188-190, in a longer version of the book. [Trans.]

5. Reply to the fundamental six questions of man on the four types of relationship (man's relationship with himself, God, the universe, and his fellow human beings) are the following:

- Who am I?
- Where have I come from?
- Where have I come?
- With whom am I?
- What have I come for?
- Where will I go?

It is impossible to give the ultimate answers to these six questions without referring to religion.

6. The purity of conscience and its power: The secularists believe that people are capable of managing all the material, psychological and spiritual facets of their lives, and do not need the elements beyond mundane life, and that there is no need of the purity of conscience for total control, it must be removed from life. This is because a clean conscience, which is the compass of the ship of human being in the ocean of existence, totally opposes self-centeredness, the basis of mundane life with the dual power of attracting pleasure and avoiding pain. How can the luminous human conscience, which is the direct messenger of God in the midst of people, work along with self-centeredness which is based upon "The end justifies the means", and "Since I like it, therefore, it is right"?

Two individuals—an extremely wicked and an extremely good—shall be identified by the presence or absence of conscience.

No being has as much diversity among its individuals as human beings. All human beings throughout history have shared the same internal and external organs; they were all called "humans". For the same human beings, which generally include both the lowest of the low and the nearest of the near have been extolled beyond limit,. Some have even regarded man as worthy of worship!

In his reply to my letter (about the contradiction existing on this issue), Bertrand Russell¹ wrote:

“Man can satisfy the sense of perfection and yearning for the Sublime Being (God) with humanitarianism!”

For me, it is not clear whether or not Russell, who has unconditionally elevated man to be worthy of divine love and the status of divinity, had read about individuals such as Nero, Caligula, Attila,² Genghis Khan, Hulagu Khan, and Tamerlane whose likes have been many in human history.

Yes, Nero had a pair of eyes, eyebrows, hands, and feet just like Socrates.³ Similarly, the bodily limbs of Ibn Muljim Murādī⁴ and Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a) had no difference at all in terms of anatomical constitution. But the inward nature of these two individuals, because of having or lacking a conscience, made them poles apart.

The infinite magnificence of the conscience defies any description except that it is a divine manifestation. Is it not an insult to humanity when we say, that humanity must only use this trustworthy messenger of God to confess or claim in courts? In other words, should conscience be only a spare part in implementing a legal item?

7. In secularism, there is no need for any motive except providing for the needs of mundane life while implementing laws related to the realities of the

¹ Bertrand Russell (1872 - 1970): a British philosopher, mathematician and man of letters. Initially a subscriber of idealism, he broke away in 1898 and eventually became an empiricist. His works include *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903), *Principia Mathematica* (3 vols., 1910-1913) in collaboration with A.N. Whitehead, *Marriage and Morals* (1929), *Education and the Social Order* (1932), *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940), *History of Western Philosophy* (1945), and popularizations such as *The ABC of Relativity* (1925), as well as his *Autobiography* (3 vols., 1967-69). [Trans.]

² Attila (?-453), also known as Attila the Hun: the leader of the Hunnic Empire (stretching from the Ural River to the Rhine River and from the Danube River to the Baltic Sea) from 434 until his death, who was one of the most feared enemies of the Western and Eastern Roman Empires. [Trans.]

³ Socrates (circa 469-399 BCE): a Classical Greek philosopher and considered one of the founders of Western philosophy. [Trans.]

⁴ ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muljim: the assassin of Imām ‘Alī (‘a). [Trans.]

second dimension (social mundane life, such as law, economics, etc.),¹. What is needed are purely natural motives to benefit from the bodily members and continue their functions. For this reason, to abide with the laws of the said realities (legal code, economics, politics, and the like) is acceptable to the strong as long as doing so is profitable and not doing so is unprofitable, otherwise the existence and non-existence of those realities are the same for them. When a person, who believes in “eliminating religion from mundane life” says, that he respects the laws governing those realities, either he is a hypocrite and makes use of this claim to advance his Machiavellian interest, or he definitely is an illusionist. We have heard the famous proverb that “The law is a cobweb” and strong animals like the lion, leopard and even the mouse are never caught in it.

8. In secularism, the necessity of revolutions and progressive movements by offering sacrifices even to the extent of giving one's life is meaningless and futile. This is because its goal is nothing but organizing mundane life. In this system, man himself is not discussed as a being capable of attaining essential excellence and perfection, for this must be sidelined on the same basis that religion is removed. It is for this reason that the contemporary legal systems, including those seemingly global ones, have no concern with the realities related to perfection (wisdom, virtue, etc.).

Usually, legal provisions are based on the principle that human beings are brothers and equal in terms of nobility and honor! It is not mentioned that this equality is only in the superstructure of natural life, otherwise the difference among human beings in terms of morality, wisdom, nobility, and acquired honor is infinite. For example, one says, “How I wish, all people have only one head and neck, and with only a single strike of the sword, I could have extinguished them.”²

Another person says,

وَاللَّهِ لَوْ أُعْطِيَتِ الْأَقَالِيمِ السَّبْعَةِ بِمَا تَحْتَ أَفْلَاكِهَا، عَلَىٰ أَنْ أَغْصِيَ اللَّهَ فِي نَمْلَةٍ أَسْلَبَهَا جِلْبَ شَعِيرَةٍ مَا نَعَانُتُهُ.

“By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with

¹. See the discussion on secularism (elimination of religion from mundane life) as having contributed to the derangement of personality (the human “I”) in managing the human being.

². Ascribed to Nero.

all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant I would not do it.”¹

9. In secularism, the value of responsibility and duty perishes in conforming life with the realities of the second dimension (such as law, economics, politics, and the like). We can witness human beings downgraded today, to the level of lifeless cogwheels. As admonished by the religions with divine origin and the great sages of both the East and the West, one can perceive his real value from the same sense of responsibility of the profiteers and egoists. Consider, for example, the expression below:

“O duty! O great and high name! You are not pleasing and charming (because one has to exert effort to discharge you), but you ask people to obey, and you shake the will of some, bringing the self to what it abhors. You do not frighten it, but you only enact a law which penetrates into the self, and even if we do not obey it, willy-nilly, we respect it. And, all inclinations, although in the end one acts against it, submit to it.

“O duty! What is your due base, and from what did you originate? What can your noble racial root be found in, that, with utmost magnanimity of kinship it totally avoids inclinations, and the condition of compulsion of the real value of people, that they could give themselves, emanates from the same basis or root.

“Being part of the perceptible world, indeed, man goes beyond himself through that basis which connects him to something which only reason can perceive. That basis is indeed man’s personality; that is, his autonomy and independence vis-à-vis the instrument of nature.”²

If the “elimination of religion from mundane life” approach had rendered only the blow of removing the spirit of responsibility, which emanates from man’s perfect-seeking personality, it is enough ground for humanity to turn away from this approach and rescue the human personality from this perilous idea.

10. In secularism, due to them all moving along the path of the “rational life”, how can a person, who knows that no part of nature and no process in

¹ *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 224. [Trans.]

² Muhammad ‘Ali Furūghī, *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 2, p. 169.

the universe is devoid of law, continue his life without law? Essentially related to his personality is intrinsic respect for the law, continuous efforts and endeavor for advancement and perfection, a noble sense of responsibility, and the unity of personality!

11. Fraternity and equality of human beings: After secularism alienated them from one another, and subjected them to “self-alienation” by negating morality and religion from their lives, and went to the extent of plunging them into the dark pit of “Man is a wolf for man,”¹ can human beings still be presented as brothers to one another?! Have the framers of Western human rights answered this question?

12. Don’t you know that by negating sublime human values and principles, all lines and words about the greatness, honor and dignity of man, written in millions of volumes of Eastern and Western books, are being falsified?! Man has incurred a wound no medicine can heal!

¹. See the dedication to Thomas Hobbes’ work *De cive* (1651). [Trans.]

Chapter 4 ***Islam and Secularism***

A Survey of Some Muslim Writings on Political Issues¹

It is of immense importance to conduct a historical survey, though a brief one, of the political concepts of Islam because it currently constitutes one billion and two hundred million out of the five and a half billion people on earth.²

Some researchers and translators of the history of political philosophy give the excuse that “The origin of political philosophy and the source of the beliefs and ideas related to government and politics and the primary political philosophies, which prevail in the contemporary world, is Ancient Greece. From there it was transmitted to Rome and from Rome to Europe during the Middle Ages until it prevailed throughout the world, as at present.”³ If they mean that no book has been written about the political philosophy of Islam, then it is not correct, because we have two types of research about the political philosophy of Islam:

a) Most of the Muslim jurisprudents, philosophers and sages, allocate an extremely significant part of their research works to practical wisdom called “civil polity”. Shahīd al-Awwal (Muhammad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn al-Makkī)⁴ has divided the sections (*abwāb*) of jurisprudence into four:

- Acts of worship (*'ibādāt*),
- Contracts (*'uqūd*),

¹ We have also discussed this topic in the commentary to the blessed instruction of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) to Malik al-Ashtar.

See Muhammad Taqī Ja‘fārī, *Hikmat-e Uṣūl-e Siyāsī-ye Islām: Tarjumeh wa Tafsīr-e Farmān-e 'Alī ('a) beh Mālik Ashtar* (*The Wisdom behind the Political Principles of Islam: Translation and Commentary on Imām 'Alī's Instruction to Malik al-Ashtar*) (Tehran: ‘Allāmah Ja‘fārī’s Works’ Compilation and Publication Institute, 1385 AHS (2006)). [Trans.]

² At present (2011), there are an estimated 1.7 billion Muslims out of a world population of 7 billion. [Trans.]

³ Bahā' al-Dīn Pāsārgīn, *Tārīkh-e Falsafī-ye Siyāsī*, vol. 1, p. 175.

⁴ Muhammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Makkī al-‘āmīlī (1334–1385) also known as Shahīd al-Awwal: the first Islamic martyr from among the Shī‘ah scholars and the author of *Al-Lum‘ah al-Dimashqiyyah* (“The Damascene Glitter”). [Trans.]

- Unilateral obligations (*Iqā ‘āt*), and
- Politics (*siyāsah*).

It is clear that Shahīd al-Awwal has divided jurisprudence into the said sections according the views of all jurisprudents (*fuqahā*) and not according to his personal opinion alone.¹

b) Books which have been written exclusively about political philosophy. Take, for example, the following titles:

- *Makātib al-Rasūl* compiled by ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn Ahmadī. This volume includes different types of political decrees and religious-moral admonitions in Islam as narrated from the Holy Prophet (ṣ);
- *Al-Wathā’iq al-Siyasiyyah* compiled by Dr. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh Haydarābādī. In this treatise, some political dimensions of Islam are traced from the Holy Prophet (ṣ);
- A considerable number of the sermons and letters of the Commander of the Faithful ('a) recorded in *Nahj al-Balāghah* compiled by the late Sayyid al-Raḍī, particularly the blessed instruction to Mālik al-Ashtar, an analysis and exposition of which has been made in one of the volumes of *Tarjumeh wa Tafsīr-e Nahj al-Balāghah* ("A Translation and Commentary on Nahj al-Balāghah");
- *Al-Ahkām al-Saltāniyyah wa ’l-Wālīyāt Jam‘ bayn al-Masā’il al-Shar‘iyyah wa ’s-Siyāsiyyah* written by Aqdā ’l-Qadāt Abū ’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī al-Baghdādī al-Māwardī (died 450 AH);
- *Al-Kharāj* authored by Qādī Abū Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm;
- *Al-Amwāl* written by Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim ibn Salām (died 224 AH);
- *Ma‘ālim al-Qurriyyah fī Ahkām al-Hasabah* authored by Muḥammad ibn Ahmad al-Qurshī, known as Ibn al-Ikhwah;
- *Al-Ahkām al-Saltāniyyah* written by Abū Ya‘lā Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Farrā‘;
- *Kitāb al-Fakhrī ’l-ādāb al-Saltāniyyah wa ’d-Duwal al-Islāmiyyah* authored by Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Ṭabātabā, known as Ibn

¹ Muḥammad ibn al-Makkī, *Dhikrī ’sh-Shī‘ah fī Ahkām al-Shari‘ah*, p. 6.

Taqtaqī;

- *Siyāsatnāmeh* by Khwājah Nizām al-Mulk;¹
- *Al-Walāt wa 'l-Quḍāt* written by Kindī;
- *Al-Kharāj wa Ṣan'at al-Kitāb* authored by Quddāmah ibn Ja'far;
- *Al-Siyāsat al-Madīnah* by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭurkhān al-Fārābī;
- *ārā Ahl al-Madīnat al-Fādilah* written by Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭurkhān al-Fārābī;
- *Akhlāq-e Nāṣirī* authored by Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī;²
- *Fiqh al-Siyāsah* by Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī Shīrāzī,³
- *Al-Imāmah wa 's-Siyāsah* written by Abū Muḥammad 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah Daynūrī (died 213 AH);
- *Tanbīh al-Imāmah wa Tanzīh al-Millah* authored by Āyatullāh al-'Uzmā āqā Mīrzā Muḥammad Ḥusayn Nā'īnī;
- *Hukūmat az Nażar-e Islām* by Āyatullāh āqā Sayyid Mahmūd Tāliqānī, a commentary on the late Nā'īnī's *Tanbīh al-Imāmah wa Tanzīh al-Millah*;
- *Tārīkh-e Siyāsī wa Dīnī wa Farhangī dar Islām*, 3 volumes, compiled by Dr. Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan;
- *Al-Muqaddimah* written by 'Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khaldūn;⁴

¹ See its English translation, Nizām al-Mulk, *The Book of Government or Rules for Kings: The Siyar al-Muluk or Siyāsat-nāma of Nizām al-Mulk*, trans. Hubert Darke (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960). [Trans.]

² See its English translation, Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, *The Nasirean Ethics*, trans. G.M. Wickens (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1964). [Trans.]

³ See its English translation, Sayyid Muḥammad Husaynī Shīrāzī, *The Islamic System of Government*, trans. Z. Olyabek (London: Fountain Books, 2002). [Trans.]

⁴ In order to prove the point that the sociopolitical realities of Ibn Khaldūn in the treatise *Al-Muqaddimah* are anchored in Islamic beliefs and that he has dealt with all these realities by referring to the primary Islamic sources, we can take into account his giving of testimony to the Qur'anic verses, traditions (*ahādīth*), and serious prayers at the end of most of the chapters of the book.

In his book, *Dirāsāt 'an Ibn Khaldūn*, pp. 485-488, Abū Khaldūn Sāti' al-Ḥaṣrī has

discussed this subject and pointing out Ibn Khaldūn's many citations of Qur'anic verses, traditions (*ahādīth*) and supplications, he said: "In view of all these things, we deem it proper to declare that Ibn Khaldūn was a man of correct faith uncontaminated by any doubt or skepticism about God and the religion."

Due to the importance of this issue, I considered it necessary to carefully examine all pages of the treatise. So I have studied all the instances of Ibn Khaldūn's citation of Qur'anic verses and traditions as well as recitation of supplications. In out of 588 pages of the book, Ibn Khaldūn has done so in 282 instances. In addition to the fundamental principles of social and economic philosophy, he has given consideration to Islamic sources and religious methodology, and we shall cite some instances as examples so as for the students of humanities, particularly economics, sociology and political science, as well as the researchers in all social sciences to know that the religion of Islam has given utmost importance to the said sciences, and at the same time, it has the highest principles of the said sciences in dealing with the individual and social lives of the members of society:

(1) The treatise *Al-Muqaddimah* commences with the following passage:

الحمد لله الذي له العزة والجبروت وبيه الملك والملوك ولله الأسماء الحسنى والنعوت العالم فلا يغرب عنه ما تظاهر النجوى أو يخفيه السكوت القادر فلا يعجزه شيء في السموات والأرض ولا يفوت أنسانا من الأرض نسما واستعمدنا فيها أجلا وأملا ويسر لنا منها أرزاقا وقساها تكفلنا الأرحام والبيوت وبifiklنا الرزق والقوت وتلبينا الأيام والوقوت وتعتبرنا الآجال التي خط علينا كتابها الموقرت وله البقاء والثبوت وهو الحي الذي لا يموت والصلة والسلام على سيدنا ومولانا محمد النبي العربي المكتوب في التوراة والإنجيل المعور الذي تحضن لفصاله الكون قبل أن تتعاقب الآحاد والسيوت ويبان زحل واليهموت وعلى آله وأصحابه الذين لهم في صحته وأتباعه الآخر البعيد والصيت والشتم الجميع في مظاهرته ولعدوهم الشمل الشتى صلى الله عليه وسلم ما اتصل بالإسلام جده المبخت وانقطع بالكفر حبله المتوات وسلام كثيرا.

"Praised be Allah who is All-powerful and All-mighty. He holds royal authority and kingship in His hand. His are the Most Beautiful Names and Attributes. His knowledge is such that nothing, be it revealed in secret whispering of left unsaid, remains strange to Him. His power is such that nothing in heaven or on earth is too much for Him or escapes Him. He created us from the earth as living, breathing creatures. He made us to settle on it as races and nations. He gave us sustenance and provisions from it. Our mothers' wombs and then houses are our abode. Sustenance and food keep us alive. Time wears us out. Our lives' final terms, the dates of which have been fixed for us in the Book [of Destiny], claim us. But He lasts and endures. He is the Living one who does not die. Prayer and blessings be upon our Chief and Master, Muhammad, the Arab Prophet, whom the Torah and the Evangel have mentioned and described; for whose birth the world that is was already in labor before Sundays followed upon Saturdays in regular sequence and before Saturn and Behemoth had become separated; to whose truthfulness the pigeon and spider bore witness. Prayer and blessings be also upon his family and the men around him who, by being his companions and followers, gained wide influence and fame, and who by supporting him found unity while their enemies were weakened through dispersion. Pray, O Allah, for him and them, for as long as Islam shall continue to enjoy its lucky fortune and the frayed rope of unbelief shall

*remain cut! Manifold blessings be upon them all!” (translation adapted from Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 3)*

(2) It is written in page 2, thus: “And I beseech God to purify my actions by His mercy and He is sufficient for my existence and He is the best Counsel.”

(3) Errors in history are caused by nothing except one’s greediness to hear amazing things and easily transmit the same orally without any investigation and assessment... and in this way, this erring historian would put Qur’anic verses in ridicule and invent baseless and amusing stories until he would stray away from the path of God. And Ibn Khaldūn cites these two Qur’anic verses:

﴿ وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ عَائِدِنَا شَيْئًا أَنْجَحَهَا هُرُواً ﴾

“Should he learn anything about Our signs, he takes them in derision.” (*Sūrat al-Jātiyah* 45:9)

﴿ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْتَرِي لَهُوَ الْحَدِيثَ لِيُضْلِلَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ﴾

“Among the people is he who buys diversionary talk that he may lead [people] astray from Allah’s way without any knowledge.” (*Sūrat Luqmān* 31:6)

One may refer to the following parts of the treatise: p. 14, line 1; p. 19, line 9; p. 38, line 25; p. 41, line 3; p. 43, line 8; p. 44, line 7; p. 48, line 25; p. 53, lines 18-19; p. 59, lines 4-5; p. 81, line 25; p. 82, line 13; p. 85, lines 24-25; p. 87, line 6; p. 91, line 14, 23; p. 95, line 17; p. 98, line 22; p. 99, line 10; p. 103, line 17; p. 105, lines 3, 18; p. 110, line 22; p. 111, line 19; p. 119, line 25; p. 122, lines 2 and 25; p. 124, line 25; p. 125, line 19; p. 127, line 11; p. 128, lines 7 and 16; p. 129, line 13; p. 130, line 15; p. 131, line 8; p. 133, line 25; p. 135, line 15; p. 136, line 17; p. 138, line 11; p. 139, lines 8 and 23; p. 140, line 11; p. 141, lines 4 and 11; p. 144, lines 8 and 25; p. 145, lines 8 and 12; p. 148, lines 3 and 25; p. 149, line 11; p. 151, line 1; p. 152, line 14; p. 153, line 25; p. 154, line 17; p. 156, line 17; p. 157, lines 13 and 19; p. 158, line 25; p. 161, line 15; p. 162, lines 23 and 25; p. 164, line 153; p. 165, line 9; p. 166, line 10; p. 167, line 4; p. 168, line 1; p. 170, line 4; p. 172, line 4; p. 174, line 16; p. 175, line 10; p. 176, line 25; p. 172, lines 24-25; p. 174, line 3; p. 175, line 15; p. 186, line 16; p. 177, line 11; p. 188, line 13; p. 189, line 25; p. 190, lines 10, 14-15, 21, 23-24; p. 191, lines 8 and 16; p. 196, line 17; p. 202, lines 3, 9, 12, and 19; p. 209, lines 1 and 25; p. 212, line 2; p. 218, line 17; p. 223, line 25; p. 225, line 12; p. 226, line 23; p. 230, line 18, p. 235, line 2; p. 240, line 14; p. 243, line 5, p. 246, line 11; p. 252, line 10; p. 256, line 25; p. 257, line 22; p. 258, lines 2 and 19; p. 260, lines 11 and 24; p. 262, line 23; p. 264, lines 5 and 7; p. 266, line 17; p. 267, line 20; p. 269, line 2; p. 270, line 22; p. 279, line 2; p. 280, line 9; p. 281, line 6; p. 283, line 9; p. 284, line 16; p. 286, line 5; p. 290, line 20; p. 293, line 20; p. 293, line 22; p. 294, line 20; 297, line 25; p. 298, line 19; p. 299, line 23; p. 302, line 21; p. 311, line 7; p. 334 (a description of the infallible *Ahl al-Bayt* (*‘a*) and a detailed discussion about Imām al-Mahdi (may Allah, the Exalted, expedite his reappearance)); p. 342, line 10; p. 343, lines 24-25; p. 345, line 25; p. 347, line 7; p. 349, line 22; p. 357, line 11; p. 358, line 6; p. 359, line 16; p. 360, line 6; p. 362, line 22; p. 364, line 22;

p. 365, line 14; p. 367, line 9; p. 368, line 9; p. 371, line 18; p. 374, line 13; p. 376, line 20; p. 377, line 11; p. 378, line 22; p. 380, lines 9, 17-20; p. 381, line 5; p. 382, line 18; p. 384, line 22; p. 389, lines 3 and 23; p. 393, line 8; p. 394, lines 3, 15 and 25; p. 395, line 22; p. 396, line 8; p. 397, lines 4 and 23; p. 398, line 24; p. 399, line 22; p. 400, line 18; p. 403, lines 3 and 17; p. 404, line 3; p. 405, line 1; p. 406, line 15; p. 406, lines 7 and 17; p. 409, line 25; p. 411, line 13; p. 412, line 10; p. 414, line 24; p. 417, line 14; p. 421, line 11; p. 423, line 4; p. 428, line 14; p. 429, line 10; p. 434, line 5; p. 435, line 5; p. 437, line 4; p. 440, line 22; p. 441, line 2; p. 445, line 15; p. 451, line 10; p. 452, line 19; p. 458, line 3; p. 467, line 12; p. 475, line 15; p. 478, line 9; p. 481, line 23; p. 485, line 17; p. 489, line 13; p. 492, line 10; p. 493, line 1; p. 494, line 8; p. 496, line 19; p. 497, line 10; p. 503, line 24; p. 514, line 1; p. 519, line 20; p. 531, line 11; p. 532, line 13; p. 533, line 8; p. 536, line 19; p. 540, line 8; p. 541, line 24; p. 543, line 7; p. 545, line 12; p. 550, line 11; p. 553, line 8; p. 554, line 12; p. 555, line 15; p. 558, line 9; p. 559, line 8; p. 560, line 1; p. 561, line 24; p. 564, line 14; p. 566, line 19; p. 568, line 18; p. 569, line 10; p. 578, line 1; p. 580, line 20; p. 581, line 25; p. 588, lines 12 and 15. There is no doubt that the mind of a thinker who would quote Qur'anic verses and traditions in approximately 250 instances in a 580-page treatise and quote a verse or recite a supplication at the end of most of the chapters is nothing but a manifestation of his faith in Islam and his vast research in social, economic, political, and mystical philosophy as well as the fundamentals of sciences and others. So far, ample studies about Ibn Khaldūn's *Al-Muqaddimah* have been conducted by thinkers of both the East and the West, among which are the following:

- (1) Abū Khaldūn Sāti‘ al-Ḥaṣrī dealt with *Dirāsāt ‘an Ibn Khaldūn* at the index of his book;
 - (2) *Falsafah Ibn Khaldūn: Al-Ijtīmā‘iyyah* by Dr. Tāhā Ḥusayn (Cairo, 1952);
 - (3) *Ibn Khaldūn: Ḥayātuḥu wa Turāthahu ‘l-Fikri* by Prof. Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh ‘Annān (Cairo, 1933);
 - (4) *Falsafah Ibn Khaldūn* by Dr. ‘Umar Farrūkh (Beirut, 1942);
 - (5) *Rā’id al-Iqtisād ibn Khaldūn* by Dr. Muḥammad ‘Alī Nishāt (Cairo, 1944);
 - (6) *Muhāḍarāt ‘an Ibn Khaldūn* by Prof. Muḥammad al-Khaḍr Ḥusayn (Cairo, n.d.);
 - (7) *Ibn Khaldūn fī ‘l-Madrasat al-‘Ādaliyyah* by Sayyid ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Maghribī (Damascus, n.d.);
 - (8) *Ma‘a Ibn Khaldūn* by Prof. Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Ḥawfī (Cairo, 1952);
 - (9) *Al-Ta‘rif Bi-Ibn Khaldūn wa Rihlatuhu Sharqan wa Gharban* (Cairo, 1951);
 - (10) *Ibn Khaldūn* by Prof. Fu’ād Afrām al-Bastānī (Beirut, 1928);
 - (11) *Muntakhabāt Min Ibn Khaldūn* by Dr. Jamil Ṣalīb and Dr. Kāmil ‘Ayyād (Damascus, 1934);
 - (12) *Ibn Khaldūn: Khamsah Ajzā‘ Manāhil al-Adab* (Beirut: Maktab Ṣādir, 1949).
- Research works about *Al-Muqaddimah* have been also done in a number of

- *Falsafeh-ye Siyāsī-ye Islām* authored by Dr. ‘Askarī Ḥuqūqī;
- *Al-Islām wa ’l-Hadārat al-‘Arabiyyah* by Kurd ‘Alī;
- *Al-Islām wa ’t-Takāmul al-Ijtīmā’ī* written by Shaykh Mahmūd Shaltūt;
- *Al-Siyāsah Min Wāqi‘a ’l-Islām* authored by Sayyid Ṣādiq Shīrāzī;
- *Al-Hadārat al-Islāmiyyah* by Adam Mitch (?), translated by Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Hādī Abū Raydah;
- *Tamaddun-e Islām dar Gharb (Islamic Civilization in the West)* written by Gustave Le Bon;¹
- *Tārīkh-e Tamaddun-e Islāmī* authored by Jurjī Zaydān;
- *Al-Fikr al-Islāmī wa ’l-Mujtama‘a ’l-Mu‘āṣir fī Mushkilāt al-Ḥukm wa ’t-Tawjīh* by Dr. Albahī;
- *Al-Islām al-Naẓm al-Insānī* written by Dr. Muṣṭafā Rāfi‘ī;
- *Al-Fikr al-Islāmī wa ’t-Tatawwar* authored by Fathī ‘Uthmānī;
- *Andīsheh-ye Siyāsī dar Islām-e Mu‘āṣir* by Ḥamīd ‘Ināyat;
- *Falsafeh-ye Siyāsī-ye Islām* written by Dr. Abū ’l-Fadl ‘Izzatī;
- *Al-Lawāmi‘ al-Ilāhiyyah*² which is an important discourse by Fāḍil Miqdād;
- *‘Awā’id al-Ayyām* authored by Mullā Ahmad Narāqī;³
- *Kitāb al-Siyāsah* by Qudāmah ibn Ja‘far;
- *Adab al-Sultān* written by Abū ’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Naṣr;

European languages including French, German, English, and Italian.

¹. This most probably refers to Gustave Le Bon’s *La civilisation des arabes (The Civilization of Arabs)* (1884). [Trans.]

². In the book *Al-Lawāmi‘ al-Ilāhiyyah fi ’l-Mabāḥith al-Kalāmiyyah*, p. 264, Fāḍil Miqdād thus says, “Religion and government are complementary and one cannot be beneficial without the other. Wisdom dictates that these two truths must be fused into a single body, and if a religious authority does not express opinion about the exigency of time and governance for the justification and leadership of society, it is a defect on the purport of religion.”

³. Mullā Ahmad Narāqī, *‘Awā’id al-Ayyām*, pp. 185-206.

- *Kitāb al-Siyāsah al-Kabīr* authored by Ahmad ibn Sahl Abū Zayd al-Balkhī;
- *Kitāb al-Siyāsah al-Ṣaghīr* by Ahmad ibn Sahl Abū Zayd al-Balkhī;¹
- *Kitāb al-Dawlah* written by Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-‘Abbās al-Sawlī;²
- *Siyāsat al-Mulūk* authored by Abū Dalaf al-Qāsim ibn ‘Īsā ibn Ma‘qal.³

How can a civilization come into being and achieve a significant height of advancement and progress without having a rational political system?!⁴

During the early period of the advent of Islam, and even in the succeeding centuries, a specified code of laws had not been framed because human life in Islam has a very significant reason, which the Muslim religious authorities know, and that is, the unity of all dimensions of human life (economic, political, legal, moral, artistic, etc.).

It is for this reason that the political discourses compiled in distinct book forms, or available to the Muslim thinkers and scholars as a section in jurisprudence (*fiqh*), are in reality the schema of one of the dimensions of the Islamic school of thought. The importance of the political dimension of man in Islam, will be pointed out to some extent in this book. According to the tradition, “Whoever wakes up without having any concern for the affairs of Muslims is not a Muslim”, a lack of participation in organizing the social lives of people is a deviation from the way of Islam. Islam has the best formula to organize and manage the rational lives of people.

All the known Qur’ānic verses on the exigency of justice (‘*adl*) and fairness (*qist*) (15 verses on justice and 18 on fairness) and those that affirm removing impediments to rational life to achieve “freedom”, are sufficient to establish the importance given by Islam to the man’s political dimension in life. Some Qur’ānic verses indicate that the most important purpose behind

¹. Ibn Nadim, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 135.

². Ismā‘il Pāshī al-Baghdādī, *Kashf al-Zunūn*, vol. 1, p. 2.

³. Ibn Nadim, *Al-Fihrist*, p. 130.

⁴. In his book *Adventures of Ideas* (1933), Alfred North Whitehead thus says, “Two pure and original civilizations have flourished in history; namely, the Islamic civilization and the Byzantium civilization.”

the apostleship (*risālah*) of the prophets of God is the emergence of justice and equity. For example, this passage:

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًاٍ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنَّزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُولَمُ النَّاسُ بِالْقُسْطِ﴾

“Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice.”¹

What is the reason that the importance given to the issues of political philosophy of Islam has no detailed scientific and jurisprudential framework nor is it practically observed?

First of all, it must be borne in mind that the governments and the rulers who have held the reigns of government according to the Sunnī school of thought used to deal with the issues in Islam according to the Sunnī notions of politics. In most Muslim societies until the recent time, the Shī‘ah school of thought had no practical power in political matters, so the jurisprudents (*fujahā*) and authorities did not feel the need to discuss the political issues. However, they have been examined in some sections of jurisprudence, philosophy and theology, thereby, categorically affirming the vital importance of thinking about governing society. I have dealt with some of these subjects in the commentary on the blessed instruction of Imām ‘Alī (‘a) to Mālik al-Ashtar in the book *Hikmat-e Uṣūl-e Siyāsī-ye Islām* (The Wisdom behind the Political Principles of Islam).

Reasons why the worldly aspects of life, like the spiritual aspects, are an integral part of the religious laws according to Islamic sources.

If the worldly aspects of life, like the spiritual aspects, were not an integral part of religious laws, all the religious admonitions, emphases and instructions to uproot corruption on earth would not have been revealed. Take, for example, the following two verses:

﴿أَلَّذِينَ يَقْصُدُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيقَاتِهِ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ قَاتِلُوْنَ يُوصَلُوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

“...those who break the covenant made with Allah after having pledged it solemnly, and sever what Allah has commanded to be joined, and cause corruption on the earth— it is they who are the

¹. *Sūrat al-Hadīd* 57:25.

losers.”¹

﴿إِنَّمَا جَزَاءَ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقْتَلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقْطَعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خَلَافٍ أَوْ يُنَفَّوْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ حُرْبٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ﴾

“Indeed the requital of those who wage war against Allah and His Apostle, and to try to cause corruption on the earth, is that they shall be slain or crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off from opposite sides or be banished from the land. That is a disgrace for them in this world, and in the Hereafter there is a great punishment for them.”²

The Noble Qur’ān, has given the order to uproot corruption on earth 41 times in different forms. If religion had nothing to do with matters pertaining to mundane life, the moral and legal emphases of the Qur’ān on fighting against corruption would have been meaningless, because people usually understand the abomination of corruption and know that it is impossible to live amidst corruption and the corrupt.

The notion, that the religious order to fight against corruption is meant for a mental case, does not hold water, because most agents of corruption and their followers do not regard their acts as a form of corruption. In fact, the egoists imagine that what they do is something meritorious!

Throughout history, we encounter hundreds of false interpretations and justifications of corruption through which its agents exonerate themselves for their wicked acts. And in many cases, they describe their filthy acts, bloodshed and transgressions of rights as campaigns against corruption!

Religion maintains that it is the function of a sound mind and pure nature to determine what constitutes corruption and who its agent is, as in determining other things, and not by those who consider themselves rightful even if they have annihilated half of humanity.

There is an emphatic order to compete in good works (*khayrāt*), as this Qur’ānic verse shows:

﴿وَلَكُلُّ وِجْهٌ هُوَ مُوَلَّهَا فَاسْتَبِّقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ﴾

¹ *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:27.

² *Sūrat al-Mā’idah* 5:33.

“Everyone has a cynosure to which he turns; so take the lead in all good works.”¹

There are two important points in this noble verse:

- The word *khayrāt* embraces all types of goodness—individual and collective, material and spiritual, worldly and otherworldly. Anyone who thinks that the word *khayrāt* only includes that which is otherworldly is either ignorant of Arabic language or someone who resorts to the “logic of rationalization” in order to advance his own interest.²
- The same important rule we have mentioned in interpreting the first item is also applicable here. That is, in most cases, a person or a group regards as good whatever he or it likes out of selfishness, though it may be a wicked act or thing, whereas, the divine religion’s admonitions and orders are based upon “real goodness”.

The permission to utilize useful things on earth for subsistence and organization of life:

﴿إِنَّمَا أَنْهَا اللَّهُ كُلُّهُ مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالٌ طَهَّ﴾

“O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and pure in the earth.”³

This point has been mentioned in the Noble Qur’ān 16 times. Human beings who live consciously in this world—believing there is harm in consuming certain food and drinking items, refrain from doing so—should also do the same with regards to actions, utterances and any connection with the world of nature. They should not consider themselves “free” and “open” to do or say anything in all the four types of relationship. Yet, given the probable harm or unpleasantness of an action, utterance or even thinking something, they do not even exercise rational precaution. It is based upon this rule that God says, “Whatever I have provided on earth is for your utility except if there is harm in doing so (physical or spiritual harm).”

Financial obligations are meant to organize the material dimension of life;

¹. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:148.

². The logic of rationalization refers to the use of certain propositions in order to support one’s claim or interest although such propositions are incapable of doing so.

³. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:168.

for example, *zakāt*, *khums*¹ and [other] known [financial] obligations are prescribed in a bid to eradicate poverty. Prevention of *kanz* (accumulation and amassing of gold, silver and other essential minerals as well as hoarding and embezzlement of wealth), usury (*ribā*) and encroachment upon the property of orphans is also intended for the same purpose. In keeping with these obligations, rights have been prescribed. The poor and needy are entitled to receive *zakāt*. Similar are the rights of those who are entitled to receive *khums* and other known financial obligations. The indigents of society also have the right to utilize withheld treasures. That is, the Muslim ruler is duty-bound to order the utilization of gold and silver which has been withheld at the expense of society's welfare.

﴿إِنَّمَا الْأَصَدَقَتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْعَمَلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤْلَفَةُ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الْأَرْقَابِ وَالْغُرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ السَّيِّئَاتِ فَرِيضَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾

*"Charities are only for the poor and the needy, and those employed to collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and for [the freedom of] the slaves and the debtors, and in the way of Allah, and for the traveler. [This is] an ordinance from Allah, and Allah is all-knowing, all-wise."*²

This decree has been made obligatory by God, the All-wise and All-knowing.

﴿وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُقْرَبُهُ وَأَلِيمُهُ وَالْمَسْكِينُ وَابْنُ السَّيِّئَاتِ إِنْ كُثُرْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ﴾

*"Know that whatever thing you may come by, a fifth of it is for Allah and the Apostle, for the relatives and the orphans, for the needy and the traveler, if you have faith in Allah."*³

﴿وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ * لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ﴾

"...and in whose wealth there is a known right for the beggar and the deprived..."⁴

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الْذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ﴾

¹. *Khums*: a kind of religious levy, equivalent to one fifth of taxable income. [Trans.]

². *Sūrat al-Tawbah* (or *Barā'ah*) 9:60.

³. *Sūrat al-Anfāl* 8:41.

⁴. *Sūrat al-Ma'ārij* 70:24-25. [Trans.]

“Those who treasure up gold and silver, and do not spend it in the way of Allah, inform them of a painful punishment.”¹

﴿أَلَّا كُمْ الْكَافِرُ هَتَّىٰ زَرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ﴾

“Rivalry [and vainglory] distracted you until you visited the graves.”²

﴿يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ أَلْوَبُوا وَبِرْبِي الصَّدَقَتِ﴾

“Allah brings usury to naught, but He makes charities flourish.”³

﴿وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ أَلْيَسِمٍ إِلَّا بِالْتَّهِ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ﴾

“Do not approach the orphan’s property, except in the best [possible] manner.”⁴

Abidance with the terms of contracts as obligatory:

﴿وَالْمُؤْفُونَ بَعْهَدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا﴾

“...and those who fulfill their covenants, when they pledge themselves...”⁵

﴿وَأَوْفُوا بِالْعَهْدِ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ كَانَ مَسُوْلًا﴾

“And fulfill the covenants; indeed all covenants are accountable.”⁶

﴿وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا الْنَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ﴾

“And do not cheat the people of their goods.”⁷

Law of retaliation (qisāṣ);

Penal law (hudūd);

Blood-money and other fines (diyāt);

Last will (waṣiyyah);

Questions on inheritance (irth);

¹. *Sūrat al-Tawbah* (or *Barā’ah*) 9:34.

². *Sūrat al-Takāthur* 102:1-2.

³. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:276.

⁴. *Sūrat al-An ‘ām* 6:152.

⁵. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:177.

⁶. *Sūrat al-Isrā’* or *Bani Isrā’il* 17:34.

⁷. *Sūrat al-A ‘rāf* 7:85; *Sūrat Hūd* 11:85.

The prohibition of accumulating wealth through illegitimate means;

Jihād;

Self-defense;

Marriage (nikāh);

Divorce (talāq);

Trading and transactions;

Giving exact measures and weights;

The prohibition of hoarding (ihtikār);

The prohibition of selling weapons (except defensive arms) to hostile people;

Debt (dayn) and pertinent matters;

Mortgage (rahn);

Guarantee and surety (dīmānah);

Peace and reconciliation (ṣulh);

Proxy and deputation (wikālah);

Renting (ijārah);

Partnership (shirkah);

Trusteeship and safekeeping (amānah);

Competition for exercise and wellbeing;

The prohibition of usurpation (ghaṣb);

Confession (iqrār);

Judgment and testimonies;

The prohibition of ignorance in direct encroachment with respect to property and other aspects of life;

Pious endowment (waqf);

Gift and donation (hibah);

Economic rules and principles;

Legal rules and principles;

Political rules and principles;

Defining the relationship with non-Muslim minorities, communities and nationalities;

Organizing medical and health affairs; and

Organizing, altering or formulating things, which become part of life with the passage of time.

It is for this reason that we can divide Islamic jurisprudence into the following sections:

- Jurisprudence pertaining to the acts of worship ('ibādah);
- Jurisprudence pertaining to personal matters;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to transactions, contracts and unilateral obligations;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to morality;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to politics and governance;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to mysticism and gnosticism;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to technology, industry and craftsmanship;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to international relations;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to culture;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to management and administration;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to jihād and defense;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to sciences;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to discoveries and inventions;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to penal law;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to other laws;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to the judiciary;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to injustice and oppression;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to undesirable acts and practices;

- Jurisprudence pertaining to doing what is good;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to medical issues and questions;
- Jurisprudence pertaining to the future and prospective issues; and
- Jurisprudence pertaining to whatever happens in the world

Jurisprudential principles and rules based upon innate discernments and rational propositions and fundamentals, which elucidate all rights and obligations in life in this world and the hereafter¹

The jurisprudential rules which refer to general propositions that justify human life in the material and spiritual domains and can be applied to many particular cases; for example, the rule of “neither loss nor harm” (*lā darar wa lā darār*) and the principle of the exigency of transactions. In acting upon these propositions, the mujtahid and the muqallid are the same. That is, they are both obliged to abide by them.

This is while in the rules of the principles of jurisprudence, only the jurisprudent (*faqīh*), after conducting a research and proving them, benefits from them in proving universal propositions in jurisprudence.

The principles and rules cited in jurisprudence can be generally divided into two:

1. The principles and rules provided for in the primary sources; for example, the rules of “negation of difficulty and trouble” (*nafī ‘asar wa haraj*) and “neither loss nor harm” as provided for in this Qur’ānic verse:

﴿مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ﴾

“Allah does not desire to put you to hardship.”²

2. The principles and rules inferred by reliable proofs; for example, the preponderance of what is more important (*ahamm*) to what is important (*muhibb*) in cases of contradiction.

In jurisprudence, the ways of knowing realities differ in the modes of discovering them but all of them are either supported by the perception of pure nature, such as *yaqīn* (certainty) and *qata‘* (suspension of judgment), or

¹ These principles and rules have been discussed in the section “The Scope of Religion”.

² *Sūrat al-Mā’idah* 5:6.

rational. Rational rulings such as exigencies that revoke the rulings' requirement, and data whose being discovered is completed by the Legislator, such as Qur'ānic verses whose indication of the reality is abstract and traditions whose issuance (being authentic) is not definite. However, by complementing their proofs through another means, their potential of revealing legal realities is rational.

Meanwhile, the principles that are cited to remove any confusion in doubtful cases, such as the principle of disavowal [of the polytheists] (barā'at) and the principle of preponderance of eliminating harm over gaining profit, are rational propositions although their being proofs can also be consolidated by the endorsement of the Islamic legislator.

In view of their functional scope in jurisprudence, jurisprudential rules can be generally divided into two:

- General rules that can be implemented in all sections (abwāb) of jurisprudence
- Particular rules that can be cited in some sections of jurisprudence.

Examples of General Rules and Particular Rules have been given in detail on pages 134 to 156

Hākimiyah and Hukm in the Qur'ān

In order to prove that the religion of God is not alien to politics, rule and man's mundane life, it is essential to study about Ḥukm from the Qur'ānic viewpoint. Sayyid Murtadā Zubaydī, a great Arabic lexicographers, has mentioned the following points while elaborating the word Ḥukm:

“H-k-m (حکم) with ḍammah vowel (u) of the hā' letter (ح) means decree (qaḍā') (in the sense of inshā' or origination) in a thing in the sense that such a thing is so or not so, whether such decree obliges a person or not. This is the opinion of the lexicographers on the meaning of Ḥukm and some of them have been more specific by saying, “Ḥukm means decree on the basis of justice. This has been mentioned by Azharī.” Qaḍā' refers to its general meaning which is creation of an obligation or recommendation, or, in relation to a thing. Zubaydī, who has earned the honorable title “Master of Language” (imām al-lughawī), has undertaken comprehensive studies of this word (Ḥukm) and its derivatives, but in no instance has he ever given

“knowledge” (“ilm) as the meaning of Ḥukm.¹

الْحُكْمُ أَعْمَّ مِنَ الْحِكْمَةِ فَكُلُّ حِكْمَةٍ حُكْمٌ وَلَا عَكْسٌ.

“Hukm includes hikmah (wisdom), and every hikmah is Ḥukm but not the opposite.”

This is because the meaning of hikmah expressed by the theosophers and Zubaydī is, “Hikmah means knowing the truths of things as they are, and acting upon what they require.” Ḥukm is one of the distinctive manifestations of hikmah, and if a man of wisdom, notwithstanding all the conditions for removing hostilities and managing the social life of people, refrains from ruling, he will be regarded as misguided from the viewpoint of the religious law. If it is used to purely mean knowledge, gnosis or wisdom, this is exceptional, and mean an essential preliminary to the “real Ḥukm” (the formulation of an obligation or recommended act or their opposites with regard to a thing), and not Ḥukm itself.

Qur’ānic Verses which Contain the Word Ḥukm and Some of Its Derivatives

These verses are of six kinds:

1) Verses indicating Ḥukm as emanating from God. There are 55 verses related to this group. Take, for example, this passage:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ أَعْبَادِهِ﴾
“Indeed Allah has judged between [His] servants.”²

Ḥukm in this category of verses means adjudication and sovereignty, and not knowledge or wisdom, although the Absolute Knowledge and Wisdom of God are requisites of His sovereignty and adjudication.

2) Ḥukm here applies to the prophets of God (‘a), as this passage shows:

﴿وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَأَحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ﴾

“But if you judge, judge between them with justice.”³

Ḥukm in this sense (adjudication and judgment) is used 14 times in the

¹. *Tāj al-‘Arūs fī Sharh al-Qāmūs* by the Master of Language Muhibb al-Dīn Abū ‘l-Fayḍ Sayyid Murtadā Zubaydī, vol. 8, p. 354.

². *Sūrat Ghāfir* (or *al-Mu’mīn*) 40:48.

³. *Sūrat al-Mā’idah* 5:42.

Qur'ān.

3) Ḥukm here refers to the decrees issued by people, as indicated in this verse:

﴿وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعُدْلِ﴾
“...and, when you judge between people, judge with fairness”¹

4) Ḥukm here originates from the Heavenly Book, as suggested by this passage:

﴿وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ﴾
“And He sent down with them the Book with the truth, that it may judge between the people concerning that about which they differed.”²

This category can be observed in 3 instances in the Qur'ān, and the “sovereignty of the Divine Book” means the settling of hostilities and removal of differences through the prophets ('a), by considering the contents of the Book.

5) There are 3 verses of the Qur'ān in which the word Ḥukm can be interpreted in its popular sense (adjudication, sovereignty and origination of do's and don'ts) as well as in the sense of knowledge and wisdom:

﴿رَبَّ هَبْ لِي حُكْمًا وَالْحِقْنِي بِالصَّلِحِينَ﴾
“My Lord! Grant me [unerring] judgment, and unite me with the Righteous.”³

In 3 verses of the Noble Qur'ān, the said two possibilities exist.

﴿أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالثِّبَوَةَ﴾
“They are the ones whom We gave the Book, the judgment and prophethood.”⁴
﴿يَا يَحْيَى خُذِ الْكِتَابَ بِقُوَّةٍ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحُكْمَ صَيِّبًا﴾
“‘O John!’ [We said,] ‘Hold on with power to the Book!’ And We

¹. Sūrat al-Nisā' 4:58.

². Sūrat al-Baqarah 2:213.

³. Sūrat al-Shu'arā' 26:83.

⁴. Sūrat al-An 'ām 6:89.

gave him judgment while still a child.”¹

Some have imagined that the Ḥukm God has endowed to Prophet Yahyā (John the Baptist) (‘a) could not mean Ḥukm in its popular sense on the ground that, prior to the age of puberty, a person cannot exercise sovereignty. The reply is clear. Just as God bestowed the asset and position of prophethood and the acceptance of the Heavenly Book to Prophet ‘Īsā (Jesus) (‘a) a few days after his birth, so He bestowed the asset and aptitude of Ḥukm in its popular sense (adjudication, sovereignty and promulgation of do’s and don’ts) to Prophet Yahyā (‘a). In the second verse above (Sūrat al-An‘ām 6:89), the probability of Ḥukm in its popular sense is far stronger than Ḥukm as knowledge and wisdom, because they are implicit in the Book and prophethood. The purport of the verse is ruling, adjudication and promulgation of do’s and don’ts through the Book and prophethood, as indicated in these two other verses:

﴿وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمْ أَكْتَبَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا احْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ﴾

“And He sent down with them the Book with the truth, that it may judge between the people concerning that about which they differed.”²

﴿إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا الْتَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا آلَّبَيْتُونَ﴾

“We sent down the Torah containing guidance and light by which the prophets judged.”³

6) It consists of Qur’ānic verses containing both Ḥukm (judgment) and ‘ilm (knowledge). Take, for example, these three passages:

﴿وَلُوطًا عَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا﴾

“We gave judgment and knowledge to Lot.”⁴

﴿فَهَمَّنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانٌ وَكُلُّا إِعْلَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا﴾

“We gave its understanding to Solomon, and to each We gave judgment and knowledge.”⁵

﴿وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشْدَدَهُ وَأَسْتَوَى عَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا﴾

¹. Sūrat Maryam 19:12.

². Sūrat al-Baqarah 2:213.

³. Sūrat al-Mā’idah 5:44.

⁴. Sūrat al-Anbiyā’ 21:74.

⁵. Sūrat al-Anbiyā’ 21:79.

“When he (Moses) came of age and became fully matured, We gave him judgment and knowledge.”¹

﴿وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشْدُهُ ءَاتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا﴾

“When he (Joseph) came of age, We gave him judgement and [sacred] knowledge.”²

If *Hukm* really meant knowledge ('ilm) and gnosis (ma'rifah), the word 'ilm in the said verses would have been redundant.

If ever there is an instance in the Noble Qur'an where the word *Hukm* means knowledge and gnosis, this is to show the similarity between the meaning of *Hukm* (promulgation of do's and don'ts) which pertains to one's actions, and that of gnosis and realities which pertains to perception and understanding. *Hukm* in the sense of *hikmah* (wisdom) includes theoretical and practical wisdom, and *Hukm* in its popular sense is one of the most distinctive manifestations of practical wisdom.

There are other verses in the Qur'an explicitly stating the definite role of religion in the different aspects of human life. For example:

﴿لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ﴾

“Certainly We sent Our apostles with manifest proofs, and We sent down with them the Book and the Balance, so that mankind may maintain justice.”³

It is clear that the establishment of justice and the observance of the Balance and law are meant for the organization of the different facets of life.

The very important conclusion we can draw from this discussion is that *Hukm* in the sense of adjudication, governance and promulgation of do's and don'ts is one of the distinctive features of the prophets of God and their genuine successors. And this principle is repugnant to the secularist way of thinking. In this regard, there are two important issues worth studying and investigating:

1. *Hukumah* refers to the same wisdom and knowledge of the political issues and economic life of people, and nothing else.

¹. *Sūrat al-Qaṣāṣ* 28:14.

². *Sūrat Yūsuf* 12:22.

³. *Sūrat al-Hadīd* 57:25.

This point necessitates that the common statesmen following the Machiavellian approach in administering their respective countries are not really worthy of governing the society because the motive of organizing the activities is based on the purely instinctive inclinations, and not anchored in the principles of the theoretical and practical wisdom, “the fundamentals and principles of the rational life”.

In selecting the goals and motives of such organizations and passing them through the filter of discreet forms of selfishness—whether for themselves or their subjects called “citizens,” they have nothing to do with wisdom as well as rational and inalterable values. In the same manner, in selecting the means for achieving those selected goals, they neither understand wisdom nor are concerned with any value. Of course, it is possible for these statesmen to somehow possess theoretical wisdom and statecraft, but it is clear that such realities are actually political activities by statesmen that are like neutral onlookers but without any right to enter the arena of political activity. It is for this reason that whenever a statesman is interpellated, he seeks refuge in the impenetrable fortress of “Sir, this is politics!” thereby slinecing the destitute ignoramuses.

2. Governance cannot be a kind of absolute rule and control over the people, let alone be a so-called religious guardianship and leadership!

It is clear that statecraft and politics do not imply the theoretical and practical wisdom as indicative of real wisdom; rather, the ruler or statesman must rule and supervise by utilizing them. He must formulate and promulgate the do’s and don’ts in both the material and spiritual domains while keeping in mind the elements and motives of “rational life” in society. History shows that the rulers can be divided into just and tyrannical rulers.

Obviously, the term *hākim* (ruler) is also laden with the concept of “command” (the term *wālī*). These two terms are essentially not laden with despotism, egoism and self-centeredness, but rather depend on the person of the ruler, commander or guardian. We amply encounter the phrases “just or unjust governors and rulers” in Islamic resources. Of course, to align each of these phrases to those who deprive the people of their freewill and human dignity, degrade and debase them, is strongly rejected and condemned by the political wisdom of Islam.

Reasons behind the Confusion in the Concepts of Ḥukm and ḥukūmah in the Minds of the Rulers and the Subjects

The causes of confusion in the concepts of Ḥukm and ḥukūmah in the minds of the people are diverse, because in some societies in history, humanity has not been able to distinguish the different meanings of Ḥukm and ḥukūmah and has therefore submitted to despotic and unjust rule. The factors causing it are the following:

1. Inability to resist oppressive powers, so that people can not afford to express any verbal or practical opposition;
2. Egotism, carnal desires and hedonistic inclinations led to pleasure-seekers, who subscribed to the school of “Let us enjoy and make the most of the present moment” and “Strive in whatever way possible to maximize pleasure, for death is in the offing”!
3. The destitute who look for their daily bread for survival and a hut to rest in, do not pay attention to the Ḥukm or ḥukūmah being good or bad. Those who can remember the clash between the Constitutionalists and the Monarchists¹ say, “At the time, many people were being asked, ‘Which group do you belong, the Constitutionalists or the Monarchists?’ They would reply, ‘We belong to the group of the family-oriented. We cannot understand what you say, and do not pointlessly bring about the death of people!’”

Some people hold the notion about Ḥukm and ḥukūmah that governance is nothing but absolute command and control; that is, the ruler is above any responsibility or duty while the people are mere subjects and subordinates of the ruler! It is clear that such Ḥukm and ḥukūmah do not exist in Islam

¹. Instigated by a proclamation issued by two religious authorities (āyatullāh al-‘Uzmā Muḥammad Kāzim Khurāsānī and āyatullāh al-‘Uzmī ‘Abd Allāh Māzandarānī) which reads, “The constitution of each country limits and conditions the will of the ruler and the offices of government so that the divine ordinances and common laws based on the official religion of the country are not transgressed,” what has become known as the Constitutional Movement, Constitutional Revolution or simply Constitutionalism (1905-11) took place due to the chaotic situation in Iran at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the popular protest over the tyranny of the governors and agents of the dictatorial regime and the unruly officials of the government, the weakness and ineptitude of the then king Muẓaffaruddin Shāh, and finally the rising awareness among the people and revolt of the clerics and ‘ulamā’. Years of struggle by the people culminated in the victory of the Constitutional Revolution in 1906. [Trans.]

because it strongly opposes it. *Ḩukm* and *hukūmah*, in whatever rational sense they are understood—must have the power to command people to follow them—cannot be called mere knowledge of the ways and means of statecraft. It is important to clarify the confusion surrounding the concepts of *Ḩukm* and *hukūmah* to prove that benefiting from sublime human character and the universal religion of God is essential, and this is impossible with the “removal of religion from mundane life” approach.

Can political philosophy only be sought by tracing it to Ancient Greece and then in the centuries after the Renaissance?

Definitely, Islamic civilization would have been impossible without rational and practical political philosophy. So, it is necessary for the analysts of political philosophy to refrain from this baseless short cut (the political philosophy of Greece and Rome to the political philosophy of the recent periods), and also to investigate the political philosophy of Islam. This error has also been committed by most historians of philosophy and analysts in the history of science. As we can observe, with regards to the history of science and philosophy, these thinkers suddenly jump from Greek science and philosophy and then deal with them in the period after the Renaissance! They overlook a considerable share of Islam in the said two branches of knowledge, and this myopic view undermines the credibility of their views on these very important subjects. They must know that the phrase “Dark Ages” for the Middle Ages is only applicable to the West and during the same centuries (particularly from the latter part of the second century up to the fifth century AH) science was flourishing in Muslim countries and some Eastern communities.

Both the ancient and modern systems of political philosophy, anchored in secularism, are incapable of solving political problems.

There are different views about the ancient and modern systems of political philosophy. Some authorities are of the opinion that the basic difference between the ancient and modern political mindsets is that the ancient political views took into account all human rights and privileges for the entire human society. In reality, the duty of the government establishment is to justify and implement this policy and not focus more on individual welfare, rights and freedom.

It is very difficult to exactly determine the difference between the political philosophy of the ancient world and the modern world. The intrinsic

progress of people has a very long history, although its origin, quality and quantity are extremely diverse in human societies. According to Whitehead, the meritorious services rendered by the Hebrew prophets to freedom are very great. Can civilization ever be conceivable without the members of society having the sense of innate individual identity, honor and dignity? Whitehead identified slavery and liberty as the main difference between the ancient and modern political views. He says:

“Now, with respect to the political factions in the ancient world, nothing has yet been settled. Every problem, which Plato¹ discusses, is still alive today, yet there is a vast difference between ancient and modern political theories, for we differ from the ancients on the one premise on which they all agreed. (Slavery was the supposition of premised theorists then. Freedom is the presupposition of political theorists now.)

For both sets of thinkers, God has been a great resource: a lot of things, which won’t work on Earth, can be conceived as true in His sight. Ancients and Moderns, in respect to this question, face directly opposite directions.”²

In order to be certain about the nature of this difference in the ancient and modern political mindsets, one must closely study social relations of people and their cultural, class, economic, religious, and moral conditions. Without this research, our views will be nothing but mere guess and imagination. Keeping in mind the difference between the two infrastructures of political philosophy (ancient and modern) and the basic problems in each of them, the said viewpoint is worth examining and reconsidering. Moreover, one must also closely examine the quality and quantity of individual liberty in the political realm of ancient Greek society.

¹. Plato (428/427-348/347 BCE): a Classical Greek philosopher, mathematician, writer of philosophical dialogues, and founder of the Academy in Athens, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world. Along with his mentor, Socrates, and his student, Aristotle, Plato helped to lay the foundations of natural philosophy, science, and Western philosophy. [Trans.]

². No reference given. [Trans.]

Chapter 5

The Relationship of Governance and Politics with Divine Laws

Are government and politics outside the realm of divine duties and laws?

In secularism, government and politics are outside the realm of universal divine duties and laws. If we glance at human history, we can see that all the governments that have ruled over societies originate from a natural need based on empirical principles and rules. This phenomenon is like the natural need of all animals for their own habitats in an environment, which can provide the things they need for their subsistence. The human race provides such a change for itself. Therefore, governments have no relationship with metaphysical realities and are devoid of inalterable divine dimensions. From the viewpoint of transcendental wisdom (*hikmat-e ‘āliyah*), however, in order to organize all aspects of the “rational life,” the system of government must also have a divine dimension. The explanation of the context of this type of government is given in the following discourse.

In whatever advanced form it may be, any system of government can have natural as well as divine dimensions.

Just as there are different levels of individual human life, there are also different levels of collective life and systems of government. The main types of human life are as follows:

1. Purely natural life: this means managing one’s animalistic nature. In this type of life, all the human faculties and powers—ranging from the simple perception and imagination up to the most important mental, rational and conscientious activities—are under the control and utility of the same “natural self”. No matter how advanced it may be, this type of life cannot be rationally proved, for it cannot provide the answer to the sublime goal of life, just as it cannot have a reasonable defense against the struggle for existence. In this arena, the champions are the self-centered, powerful ones. If the system of government—even in its most advanced form—would revolve around the axis of the “natural self”, whose primary distinctive feature is egoism, it does not need the involvement of divine factors because they impede this system of government, which must go against those factors.

2. Natural-divine life: this means that initially the human beings strive to solve their problems by benefiting from nature and their fellow human beings by virtue of natural laws, and secondly, they organize their life according to the attainment of the lofty goal of life, which is entry into the Axis of Sublime Perfection. In this type of life, involvement of a divine factor becomes necessary in the sense that without such involvement, it is impossible to answer the six questions which can be deduced from this Qur'ānic verse:

﴿إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾

*"Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return."*¹

Similarly, without the involvement of a divine factor, which religion possesses, no rule or law can answer the fundamental questions of man pertaining to the four types of relationship. As the author of *Hikmat wa Ḥukūmat* says, "Government or system of statecraft, whatever advanced form it may assume, is a very primary concept and natural experiment..."²

This is like the system of life of ants and bees based upon their respective laws of instinct and natural peculiarities. The only difference is that the systems of human life are far more complex, extensive, elaborate, and intricate, because human beings have faculties and powers such as general perceptions, rational abstractions, thinking and intellection, constructive competitions, discovery, and creativity- anchored in ingenuity, and the like. No matter how systematic the abovementioned animals may be, their life is limited and beyond improvement, development and enhancement. Inspite of having all those faculties and potentials, if human life revolves around the axis of egoism and justifies its activity with the laws of sheer nature, without benefiting from the divine rays that transcend matter and materiality, it is essentially the same animalistic life we have mentioned earlier. In the same vein, politics and government can also be divine-natural, as in the case of the luminous path of the prophets ('a).

3. Intellectualism: what we mean by this kind of life is the use of reason in all aspects of life. Nowadays, this kind of life is usually associated with the West, and many Westerners claim it. The basis of the logical soundness of this kind of life is that all affairs of human life, which include the theoretical

¹ *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:156.

² Mahdi Ḥā'irī, *Hikmat wa Ḥukūmat*, n.p. [Trans.]

and practical intellect, are brought to fruition. It seems that tracing all the affairs of life to the intellect has not yet been realized fully in any society and it can be said that such substantiation is impossible. For example, which conventional theoretical or practical intellect can afford to affirm the real value of justice, human dignity and rational freedom in the arena of “might is right” and “survival of the fittest”? All societies that claim to be following the rational approach in the sociopolitical domain of life consider themselves original proponents of ideological realities.

We can observe the most illustrious example of this support in approximately 20 cases in the introductory paragraphs of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which contain the preliminary provisions and value-laden terms. The introductory paragraphs of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are as follows:

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

“Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief, and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

“Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

“Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

“Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

“Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

“Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of

the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

“Now, therefore, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive;

“by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms; and, by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves, and among the people of territories under their jurisdiction.”¹

Most of these paragraphs have expressed support for the values of life. The value-laden terms and phrases used in the entire preamble and other provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are as follows:

“Man as an honorable being”, “inherent dignity of man”, “members of the human family”, “fraternity and equality”, “friendly relations”, “spirit of humanity”, “equal rights”, “freedom”, “peace”, “justice”, “the highest aspiration of the common people”, “reason and conscience”, “life”, “belief”, “faith of the United Nations”, “universal respect”, “sense of common understanding”, “barabarous acts”, “rebellion” “strive” “better standards of life”, and, “proper observance of moral imperatives”.²

In the said kind of life, government and politics (so-called “rational”), some universal propositions are assumed to be presuppositions on the basis of which life, government and politics function. That is, in order to prove the realness of their demands and activities, the people, and rulers, invoke those presuppositions, which might have inherent defects that cannot be remedied.

The best example of such presuppositions is democracy, which has been accepted as a fundamental principle by countries and their rulers and administrators, and is used to interpret and establish social, political, cultural, legal, economic, and similar propositions. As such, life, government and politics being “rational”, does not mean that all their issues can really be interpreted through the intellect’s indisputable principles and axiomatic rules.

¹ *United Nations’ 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, “Preamble,” available online at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr>. [Trans.]

² *Ibid.*

In a bid to prove this claim, it is sufficient to pay attention to the six leading issues, which, scientifically and rationally, exist under the outward levels of the democratic system.

The Democratic System in Life, Government and Politics, and Its Inherent Problems

Before stating these six problems, it is necessary to point out that no conscious man of reason ever doubts that next to the blessing of life, human freedom is the highest bounty and excellence bestowed by God, the Glorious, to human beings. A person bereft of freedom is a person bereft of identity and personality, and sheer plaything in face of natural forces and under the yoke of egoist powerful individuals. It is clear that such a person is a moving creature for whom life is a burden he must carry. He has a borrowed identity and fragmented personality for which he must ask permission, at every moment, from natural forces and egoist powerful individuals. Hence, we categorically say that anything that deprives a person of freedom commits the same crime of depriving him of his life, or at least, putting it in derangement.

1. Are the desires of people reasonable at all times, and does egoism have no pivotal role in democracy?
2. Is every phenomenon considered the desired aspiration of the people and the rulers, throughout history, really meant for the real wellbeing of the people and the rulers? If it is so, how can the wars, bloodshed, oppression, and treaty violations motivated by power, position and wealth, throughout history, be justified? Moreover, how can the periods of slavery, the foundation of all cultural, legal, political, and moral issues, be justified?
3. Shrewd inculcations to let certain things or persons appear desirable or undesirable, influence the views and opinions of people accordingly, and in simpler and clearer terms, “an artificial supply for an artificial demand” comes into being. Given this, can one afford to talk about real democracy?
4. Throughout human history, eloquent and elegant slogans, terms and expressions have far-reaching and profound impact upon conditioning the minds of people. In view of the fact that the motive or goal of the sloganers is not the exact content of those slogans, and that they express them through an extreme and utopian optimism, what can be done?

لُفْظٌ شِيرِينَ رِيْگَ آبَ عَمَرَ مَاسَتْ
لُفْظٌ هَا وَ نَامَهَا چُونَ دَامَ هَاسَتْ

The road is smooth, and under it are pitfalls: amidst the names there is a dearth of meaning.

Words and names are like pitfalls: the sweet (flattering) word is the sand for (the sand that sucks up) the water of our life.¹

It is appropriate to open before your eyes an index of the deplorable plight of mankind in contrast to the sweet, beautiful and charming words:

O freedom, O anti-chains, O the best means of giving breathing space to man, what burdensome chains have been tied to human feet in your name!

O justice, what acts of oppression and tyranny have been committed in your sacred name and kept human society disunited, and far from harmonizing its way of life with your principles!

O right, O the beginning, the origin and the conclusion of the universe, how many falsehoods have they embellished with your name, and how they have deprived you of humanity!

This is the perpetual state of affairs of the weak. The egoist power holders have, through charming slogans and words, silenced them and changed their lives into a lifeless movement.

تو به نام حق فریبی مر مرا
تا کنی رسوای شور و شر مرا
نام حقم بست، نی آن رای تو نام حق را دام کردی، وای تو
ام حق بستاند از تو داد من من به نام حق سپردم جان و تن
یا به زخم من رگ جانت برد

Thou beguilest me with the Name of God in order that thou mayst expose me to shame and confusion.

The Name of God enthralled me, not thy contrivance: thou madest the Name of God a trap: woe to thee!

The Name of God will take vengeance from thee on my behalf: I commit my soul and body to the Name of God.

¹ *Mathnawi-ye Ma'navi*, Book 1, Ramaðāni Manuscript, p. 24, lines 16-17.

See *The Mathnawi of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 1, lines 1060-1061, pp. 115, 117. [Trans.]

Either it will sever the vein of thy life by my stroke, or it will bring thee into a prison as (it has brought) me.¹

5. Like law and culture, if we classify politics into two important types (advanced and adherent), the democratic system will classify as “adherent”, and not “advanced”. In order to elucidate this point, it is necessary to give a brief definition of what constitutes “adherent” and “advanced”.

In the cases above (law, culture, politics, and the like), “adherent” means that there is no principle beyond the conventional natural life for man’s spiritual growth and advancement. “Advanced” means that one must follow a certain set of sublime principles because without doing so, it is impossible to achieve any spiritual growth and progress. “Advanced law,” means that it is the human beings themselves who identify what is good and bad for life, accept certain propositions as legal provisions, and act upon them in the domain of their lives. No person or power has the right to determine the legal rights of the members of society. “Advanced law” is that part of the principles which ensures the progress and perfection of man’s identity as well as organizes his natural life.

It is clear that no legal, moral, cultural, political, or economic system can be purely “adherent” or “advanced” because the rational, conscientious and empirical perception of the human beings plays a very vital role in identifying and practically addressing the concerns of their lives. For this reason, the religion of Islam has set the human intellect, heart (spirit) and experience as proof, and indispensable in identifying the objects of concern, except in very few instances. It follows that as far as the subjects, phenomena and addressing the genuine needs of human life are concerned, Islam has an “adherent” dimension—whether it is in realm of law, morality, politics, or economics.

Law, ethics, culture, and politics that can set the goal-oriented life of man in the Axis of Absolute Perfection and provide the answer to his six fundamental questions, must definitely follow a set of “advanced” principles in dealing with the four types of relationship. For example, acquiring a sublime character, keeping in constant contact with God, the Glorious, and responsibly exploiting the bounties of the earth in which he lives. If we look

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 148, lines 9-11.

See *The Mathnawi of Jalāluddīn Rūmī*, Book 1, lines 2337-2340, p. 251. [Trans.]

at politics only within the prism of the democratic system then democracy means that the people are free in whatever they think, whatever they want and whatever means they use to achieve an end except in cases where it arbitrarily affects the life of other members of society. This is the same “adherent politics” which imprisons humanity in the age of the cave-dwellers though it may have been adopted the world over. By following “adherent politics,” man cannot take a step beyond the reach of selfishness, whereas, his goals for perfection are definitively divine and metaphysical.

6. Evolutionary movements and transformations in history, have been initiated by a few individuals or an insignificant minority (quantitatively speaking). If these approaches and movements were entrusted to the skills and inclinations of the majority, humanity could not have taken a single step forward. There is no instance at all in which the majority of people, in a primitive society, directly rose up and made some discoveries and inventions, or delivered society from ignorance and misery, thereby, bringing the elements of progress into existence.

7. The following is a passage about democracy from a Platoist:

“The more Plato would think about this matter—this folly which is called ‘democracy’—the more he would be astounded. It is the democratic system, which relies on the carnal desires and inclinations of the public in electing political leaders. The reason behind Plato’s astonishment is that in trivial issues such as addressing our need for a pair of shoes we do not rely on anybody except a skilled shoemaker. Yet, how can we accept anyone who has many voices (or many voices support him) to rule? When we get sick, we want a proficient doctor who is highly skilled in medicine, and “not a good-looking and eloquent doctor”.¹

That politics is a specific field, which requires certain expertise, is not inconsistent at all with the need to harmonize politics and government with man’s divine dimension.

In proving that statesmanship is a special art, there is a very good parable reported from Plato. He says:

“Statesmanship is the art of weaving. One must witness how a skilled

¹. Plato, *Jumhūriyyat (Republic)*, trans. Ḥannā Khabbāz, “Preface,” p. xvi.

weaver would initially turn wool into thread, and then how he would twist threads together in a particular scheme and way. Afterward, he would hand them over to his weaving factory and finally he would bring out from that factory a beautiful textile which could be used as man's garment... The art of statesmanship is similar to the craft of weaving, as it can unite groups of free and separate individuals, organize them and build their harmonious relationship with such accuracy and dexterity that they become an elegant and decorated piece of cloth covering the whole country.”¹

Then, in explaining and affirming the statements of Plato, the author of *Hikmat wa Ḥukūmat* thus says:

“From this philosophical parable of Plato, like the earlier account of Aristotle, the point becomes clear that the art of statesmanship, like handcraftship, is a practical skill. In terms of its direct connection with the needs of individuals and citizens and the daily happenings in the country and its relations with other countries, near and far, is like a garment, which must have cohesion, harmony and unison. A statesman must know the universal moral precepts and theoretical pure sciences, acquire inward traits and excellences, such as wisdom (practical wisdom), bravery and modesty, which can be summed up in justice. Then, he must practically and sagaciously have extensive knowledge of the actual particular matters and changing realities about his country, preserve harmonious relations among the citizens and maintain a friendly neighborhood with other countries, so that he can discharge this practical responsibility satisfactorily. The basic element of statesmanship is reflecting on the rational and religious tenets, principles and rules which are not consistent with theoretical reason. His main responsibility is to identify the internal and external issues of the country and its changing geopolitical realities, which are generally outside the realm of higher rational thinking or theoretical reason. However, since practical reason always connects knowledge and action, the intelligible and the tangible, the general points of theoretical reason with the particular and minor points of practical reason, the statesman must also know his ideals from the philosophers and moral thinkers. The moral ideals must be perfectly compatible

¹. Mahdi Ḥā'irī, *Hikmat wa Ḥukūmat* (*Wisdom and Government*), pp. 77-78.

with the actual particular concerns and issues of the country.”¹

In view of the words of the said author, there are some important issues to examine: In the above pertinent passage, Plato has presented a dimension of the statesman’s actual functions in a very elegant parable.

The said dimension refers to the physical appearance of a society, which a professional statesman has brought into being through his political skill. Thus, this parable by Plato does not describe and elaborate all his beliefs on the nature of politics, the salient features of a statesman, and the purpose behind political activities, which is to prepare the people for the attainment of the sublime goal of their lives.

Second Issue: This parable does not reflect all the beliefs of Plato on government and politics.

That Plato likens statesmanship to good weaving, which must have cohesion, unity and unison for the people, does not reflects all of his ideas. It is certain that the statesman must not interfere in the inner, spiritual and ideological state of affairs that the citizens have or must have. If the statesmen of a country do not know who the individuals that they have woven, cut and sewn are and how they can be, are actually painting on the roof of a room which either does not exist or is not suitable for that painting.

But we know that the totality of Plato’s ideas on politics and government are acceptable to the divine religion. The righteous men of wisdom, who regard the blossoming of all dimensions—material and spiritual—of man as necessary, base their ideas on these very principles, and we shall touch on this point below.

Third Issue: Keeping in mind the totality of Plato’s ideas about politics and government as well as the education of the members of society, one cannot say that this great personality, like Aristotle, is among those who agree with secularist ideas.

Since the ideas of Plato about government and politics are among the most important views on politics utilized by most political philosophers, both in the past and in the present, it is necessary to make a summary of his ideas in this discourse.

Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire,¹ who was among the most authoritative

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79.

philosophers in understanding and interpreting the ideas and beliefs of Aristotle and Plato in the West, has mentioned the fundamental elements and pillars of Plato's political philosophy in the following manner:

"It must be noted that the reason behind giving an elaborate account of the fundamental elements of Plato's political philosophy is that every political philosophy scholar justifies Plato's views due to its immense importance in validating his own opinion. Yet, it is not sufficient to separate the children from that which may undermine their innocence. In the same manner, it is not sufficient to mold the children's intellects with the light of cogent knowledge and make virtue acceptable to them by means of advice, admonition, and giving parables. Instead, beyond that, the principles of religion which nature has ingrained in their hearts must flourish within. Those principles of religion from which firm beliefs spring are principles, which connect man to God—the God who is the First, the Middle and the End-point of everything.² It is God, who is the Real Criterion of justice for the people He has created, and belief in His existence is the foundation of all laws. These are the essential beliefs, which must be the standard of educational training of the children. These are the same transcendent rules, which must be inculcated into the minds of the citizens by the legislator, if ever he is a man of wisdom. These beliefs are simple inasmuch as they are useful. These beliefs can be identified with three basic propositions: God, His supervision of the universe, and His justice, which is immune from giving favor to any party. Without these beliefs, man will get lost in the midst of the waves of incidents in this world. That person denies himself as long as he does not know where he comes from and what the sacred ideal is which his self must willingly follow and rely on. As for justice—so long as this rule is not the focus—there is no fixed rule, because justice, which is the one that gives life to the state and its government cannot be implemented except by God, in whose Eternal Essence justice is integrated. It is appropriate, therefore, for us to take action many years before the beginning of upbringing and training, to instill these sacred beliefs into the minds of the

¹ Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire (1805 – 1895): a French philosopher, journalist, statesman, and possible illegitimate son of Napoleon I of France. [Trans.]

² See Plato, *The Laws*, Book 4, "Reply 56 of Athenian to Cleinias," trans. Dr. Muhammed Hasan Lütfi, p. 129: "God, as the old tradition declares, holding in his hand the beginning, middle, and end of all that is, travels according to His nature in a straight line towards the accomplishment of His end."

children. In fact, the law itself must not be lax in bringing to fruition those beliefs by means of being contented, but focus on those who forget those beliefs due to their inner weakness or moral corruption.

Any uprising or mode of training, which is not religious is defective and invalid. Any state whose citizens do not pay attention to these very important issues is on the verge of destruction. It is not correct to say that statesmen, who are unaware, imagine that they have to utilize religion sometimes for their rule. This is not so, because religion is needed for the identity of societies and states—in fact, it is above common needs. The need for religion is more than its function of organizing life. Of course, by having both essential and utilitarian dimensions [of religion], it can also be effected in organizing and ensuring the welfare of society. In various forms of human intellection, religion is the interpreter of pure nature and the most profound agent expressing realities. Man treats as holy all divine truths (such as the prophets and the saints (*awliyā'*)), as they honor pious fathers as blessed sources of all good, particularly of virtue and sound reason.

The state, as perceived by Aristotle, is constituted by people who are equal and free. The people collectively benefit from their own works, understanding and awareness, and all of them nurture the divine seeds ingrained in them. By virtue of the pact of brotherhood, they are related to one another and for the preservation of their country's government, they obey their illustrious leaders, who are tactful and prudent. These are the leaders, elected by the people to rule over them. These are the leaders, who have developed and undergone their training for virtues and all the sciences related to the discharge of their functions. They entrust their noble lives to the sacred creatures of God.

There is no need for the state, which is formed for the maintenance of internal harmony to constantly express its desire for harmony to its neighboring states. It must always be ready to face the aggression of any other state, and through regular rigorous training, its defenders must constantly resist the enemies, regardless of their number. Peace, not war must be the sole motive behind its patriotism and various military trainings and preparations, as done by famous communities and nations in history.

It should refrain from aggression against others just as it cannot withstand any internal revolution or violent movement. As the peaceful, prudent state decides to refrain from oppressing others, it shares half of the goal of other states in arming themselves; that is, given the presence of justice in applying

force and enjoining virtues, it has no motive other than defense when attacking tyrannical enemies.”¹

After stating in a relatively elaborate manner the basic elements of Plato’s political philosophy, Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire thus said:

“These are the basic elements of Aristotle’s politics. Is this philosophy not full of truth, greatness and ample benefit? Is there anything obsolete in this upright and prudent state policy? Is this policy something delusional? Can it be said that this policy cannot be applied except to Greece where Plato lived? They are the same noble truths that have immortalized his political ideas. It is the same truths that have made this philosopher the validator of the philosophers’ and statesmen’s ideas. In most cases, people call this philosophy “Platonic Dreams” and sometimes, some intellectual scholars even reject this label, making a mockery of it. These sensible objections and allegation against “dreams” cannot be regarded as a criticism of this philosopher who pioneered these ideas and conveyed them to mankind. Instead, this “criticism” aptly clarifies the point that justice, reason and virtue are empty rhetoric for people and that these allegations and derisions against Plato’s sociopolitical beliefs are tantamount to the denial of innate human nature, history and society.”²

The concluding statement highlights the most devastating tragedy in human history, and that is, the lack of importance given by people in various societies to justice, reason and virtue, and even regarding them as empty rhetoric. Of course, the esteemed translator should add “common” to “people” because to believe that the common people do not give importance to the three concepts, regarding them as empty rhetoric, is a sort of error in judgment. To state that, “these allegations and derisions against Plato’s sociopolitical beliefs are tantamount to the denial of innate human nature, history and society” is a most vital and constructive outcry any person has ever expressed to his fellow human beings.

Fourth Issue: The author says, “The basic element of statesmanship is reflection on the rational and religious tenets, principles and rules which are not consistent with theoretical reason. In fact, the main responsibility of the statesman is to identify and know the internal and external issues and affairs

¹ Aristotle, *A Treatise on Government*, “Introduction” by Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire in French, translated into Arabic by Ahmad Lutfi al-Sayyid, pp. 20-22.

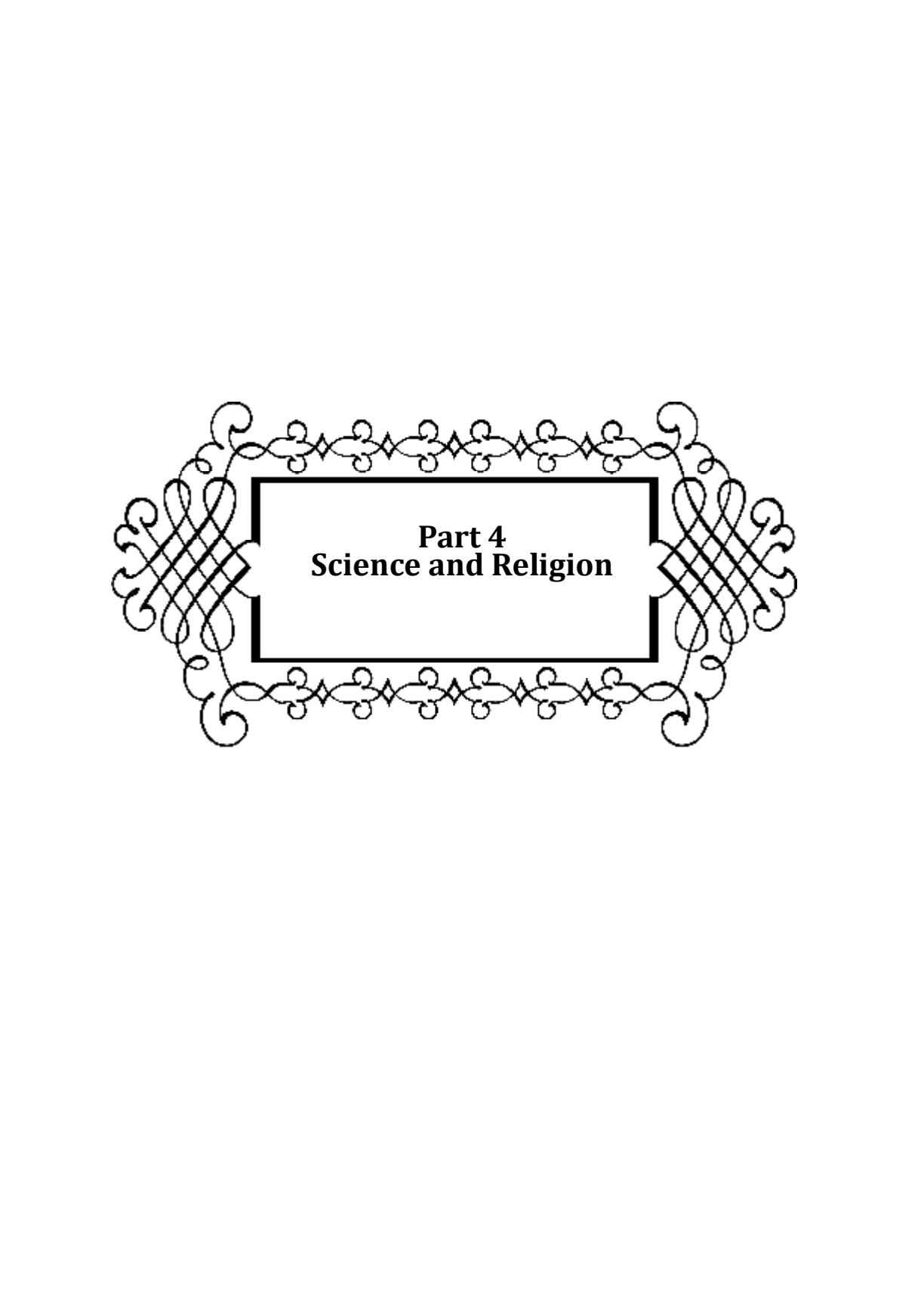
² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

of the country and its changing geopolitical realities which are generally outside the realm of higher rational thinking or theoretical reason.”

In this regard, this question comes to the fore: Can people be persuaded to lead a “rational life” even without necessary and sufficient familiarity with the rational and religious tenets, principles and rules as well as belief in the most important and essential of them? This is because the statesman does not tell anything about the causes of anything that previously transpired in society, is currently happening, or may possibly happen in the future. Instead, by discerning or perceiving them, he would choose, issue judgment and, in a sense, bid and forbid. Can an intelligent, just and wise statesman find out the best of goals amidst a plethora of events in various periods, choose the ways and means suitable for the said goals, and promulgate the appropriate laws for the people, without knowing the rational and religious tenets, principles and rules (at least within the country under his jurisdiction)?

In view of the necessity to persuade human beings to lead a “rational life” and to prepare them for the achievement of the sublime goal of the said life, the existence of a lofty spiritual station, alongside professional political activity, is indispensable.

Statesmen should sincerely coordinate with the spiritual station at all times in all societies, leading the society toward the best of goals. This harmony does not imply that the statesman and the holder of a spiritual station have to divide and partition man into two dimensions (physical and spiritual) and each of them take charge of one dimension. It means that the two dimensions of a single reality, which is the “rational life” of man, shall be managed by the spiritual and political stations without any contradiction and incompatibility. The psychologist and the physician takes charge of one dimension of man although the importance of psychotherapy, as far their respective areas are concerned, is greater than that of medical science, which is concerned with man’s physical health, whereas, the former is concerned with the soul, mind, self, personality, and identity. These two groups cannot divide the human being into two parts and say, “I have nothing to do with the physical dimension of man” or, “I have no business with his soul, mind, personality, and identity.” Don’t you think that man’s exit from the scene of real life and entrance into the barren plains of egoism, self-centeredness, illusions, coining of terms, and finally nihilism is the result of such fragmentation of the human personality? Unfortunately, it is.



Part 4
Science and Religion

Chapter 1

The Relationship of Science, Philosophy and Religion with Rational Life

Science, Religion and Philosophy, the Three Main Elements of Man's Rational Life

It seems that in order to understand the three great domains of science, philosophy and religion and their relationship with rational life, two types of study and research are possible.

First: Directly examining the nature and salient features of the three domains

Second: Choosing the kind of life with the best standing in relation to these three realities

If it means pure natural life, which originates and exists as motivated by natural factors, this kind of life has nothing to do with perfection and goals beyond selfishness; it has nothing to do with justice, humanitarianism, searching for material and spiritual advancements derived from sense of noble duty (beyond self-interest). This life does not consider the nobility, and dignity of humanity. This life is harmonious with tangible and intelligible beauties and inclination to them so long as they enhance and make desirable this natural life of man. The fundamental motive in this kind of life is obtrusive selfishness and self-aggrandizement, whereas, the three realities under discussion are related to the degrees of perfection and sublime aspects of life which we call “rational life”.

At the beginning of this research, we shall briefly point out the meaning of religion, science and philosophy and then we will delve into them.

1. Religion refers to the set of beliefs, duties and manners without which life would have no basis except obtrusive selfishness—the same selfishness, which the shameful impotence of mankind in controlling it, has made its history unjustifiable. Religion denotes an advanced consciousness in life, knowing it, and moving towards the Axis of Absolute Perfection.

چیست دین؟ برخاستن از روی خاک تا که آگه گردد از خود جان پاک

What is religion? Rising up from the face of the dust so that the pure

*soul may become aware of itself*¹

2. Philosophy signifies knowledge of the foundations of the universe and readiness to answer the questions about the variables in the universe; that is, variables which science assumes the responsibility of knowing. Putting this knowledge into action along the path of “searching” for perfection also means wisdom, whose concerns are realities and not conventional concepts, which are based upon understanding and reason.

3. Science consists of discovering realities through observation, experiment and inward perception, or intuition. It is clear that because of the relativity of discovering realities, scientific relation with them is also relative.

It is clear that without religion, science and philosophy, movement along the path of “rational life” will be impossible.

What is Rational Life?

“Rational life” is a kind of life in which the potential of the human being is activated, to the extent possible, to meet his material and spiritual needs. It is the same life described by God:

1. Hayātān tayyibah (good life):

﴿مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيهِ حَيَاةً طَيِّبَةً﴾
*“Whoever acts righteously, [whether] male or female, should he (or she) be faithful—We shall revive him with a good life.”*²

2. Life by a manifest proof (*hayāt ‘an bayyinah*):

﴿لِمَنْ هَلَكَ عَنْ يَقِينٍ وَّبَحْيَ مَنْ حَيَّ عَنْ يَقِينٍ﴾
*“...so that he who perishes might perish by a manifest proof, and he who lives may live on by a manifest proof.”*³

3. Real life:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحِি�ْكُمْ﴾
*“O, you who have faith! Answer Allāh and the Apostle when he summons you to that which will give you (real) life.”*⁴

¹. Muhammad Iqbāl Lāhūrī, trans. Arthur J. Arberry, *Jawādnāmeh*, “Dīn wa Waṭān,” lines 1039-1040. [Trans.]

². *Sūrat an-Nahl* 16:97.

³. *Sūrat al-Anfāl* 8:42.

⁴. *Sūrat al-Anfāl* 8:24.

A life without the religion of God is not life at all; it is idiomatically, a caricature of life, which may, due to its uncurbed egoism, turn all the farms of human life into soil and put a stamp of heroism on itself!

Whenever the self-defeated ignorant masses find their lives meaningless, they see no clear reason for living, no motives but eating, sleeping, [expressing] anger, and [satisfying] carnal desires. These individuals are pacified by their ego saying that an ideal, organized and law-abiding life is one in which we can satisfy our desires and have no other duty except to avoid disturbing others. Yes, such a life is ideal for them, and for its desirability, we have no need for any reasoning! We have no business with those who do not differentiate between contradictory things.

For these people, ignorance means knowledge; responsible personal freedom equals unrestraint; sensible and intelligible beauty is equivalent to a momentary source of stimulation; justice is synonymous with oppression; law is identical with law violation; life with understandable identity and searching for perfection is the same as the life of ants and bees. For them, service to humanity, human life and rights is tantamount to utilizing mankind for the urges of the uncurbed natural self, and extermination of mankind and negation of any duty tantamount to the rights of others. Finally, and in sum, existence is practically the same as non-existence! This is the requisite of the meaning of the famous statement ingrained in the minds of all ‘conscious’ individuals: “Everything is possible for anyone who does not believe in God.”

The implication of the above statement is that if the life of human beings has no rational meaning, everything is not only permissible, but resisting a pleasure which necessitates the extinction of the entire humanity is a genetic disease.

The kind of life constituted by “religion, science and philosophy in the sense of wisdom” enjoys the merits of the highest ideals, which exist in the hearts of the mature Children of Adam ('a). Since the real definition of life is not possible for us, we have no option but to make use of its salient features and merits in order to know it. This is the way to identify every reality, whose essence and identity we are incapable of knowing.

The Salient Features of Rational Life

1. Rational life cannot be sacrificed for the means of life: Since “rational life” enjoys pure identity, this life would never allow itself to be sacrificed by the self. Consider this point very well:

While having a strong desire for what is ideal, man usually plunges into the tools of pleasure when deprived of “rational life. This inclination exists up to the exit of real life from the realm of existence after which most people experience a sense of futility.

2. The ultimate answers to the six fundamental questions can only be provided in the “rational life” whose three pillars are religion, science and philosophy in the sense of wisdom.

The ultimate answers to the six questions are as follows:

The First Question: Who am I?

We have this highly constructive statement from the Commander of the Faithful ('a): “Whoever knows himself has attained the highest degree of knowledge and gnosis.”

Keeping in mind the meaning of this noble statement, if we agree on the real answer to the first question, we will also agree on the answers to the remaining questions above.

We can put the answer to the first question in this manner: I am a creature constituted by various natural elements and a reality, based upon sublime wisdom of God, called the human soul or *nafs*. It makes its entrance into the universe through the channel of nature and in passing through it, with the help of the divine spirit breathed into it, is ready to attain the lofty goal of life and be situated in the Axis of Absolute Perfection, God, the Glorious. This is a concise answer to the question “Who am I?” in the “rational life”

The Second Question: Where Have I Come From?

I am a creature with all those faculties and a strong desire to attain the lofty goal of life beyond matter and materiality. It is affirmed that out of wisdom and willpower of God, the All-powerful, All-knowing and All-wise, I have been taking a walk on this earth. So, I have come to this world from a world beyond matter.

The Third Question: Where Have I Come?

The answer to the question “Where have I come?” is as follows: I have come to a very meaningful and great working-place which activates the existence of us human beings.

The Fourth Question: Who Am I With?

Our fellow human beings in this world—with whom we interact—would all pass and come into this world through the channel of male-female reproduction. With the principle of division of labor, social life will be ready for us. My fellow human beings also possess everything I have in the natural and supernatural realms. All of us human beings have certain values and the more correctly they are applied in practice, the more harmonious and unified we become. The origin, path and destination of all of us is the same.

The Fifth Question: Where I Am Heading?

Human existence, with all the amazing physical and spiritual activities it has presented throughout history, has clarified itself for us and also affirmed that the most insignificant phenomenon, behavior, speech, and intentions of man cannot be destroyed without outcome,

یا سبو، یا خم می، یا قدح باده کنند
یک کف خاک در این میکده ضایع نشود

It is also proved that without Resurrection and eternity, no value, nay no duty or right can be established, and it became clear that

روزگار و چرخ و انجم سر بسر بازیستی
گرنه این روز دراز دهر را فرداستی

*The world, fate and stars are all your playthings
Otherwise, this long day of fortune is your tomorrow.¹*

It is established that every wise man, given his balanced mind, can feel the perpetuity of his soul in this life, and inculcate in his mind that the end of this life is not his last station, it then follows, that he will realize “where he is heading”.

¹. Nāṣir Khusrū, *Dāwān-e Ash ‘ar*, Elegy 241.

The Sixth Question: Why Have I Come?

The answer to this question will be completely clarified, for I realize that my existence stems from the sublime wisdom of God, who will never do anything futile. I have great potential which, if activated, will make me attain my lofty goal in life. I can also unmistakably feel a strong desire within me to attain the said lofty goal. The genuineness of this strong desire is as real as all these scientific, technological and artistic advancements. But, the goal one must do his best to attain is to be situated in the Axis of Absolute Perfection, God. The main factor of being situated in the Axis of Absolute Perfection is the same struggle and searching called “worship” (*'ibādah*), in the parlance of religion.

What is worship? After the state of awakening (*yaqzah*) and the sense of meaningfulness of one’s existence in the world, all physical, mental and psychological actions of man are considered acts of worship because it is the moment of feeling that man is in the presence of God. In the sight of God, all the various acts of worship, performance of duty, and observance of human rights are regarded as *dhikr* (remembrance), *tasbīh* (glorification of God), *rukū'* (bowing in prayer), and *sajdah* (prostration) in this vast place of worship (*ma 'bad*) which is called the “world” by those who are plunged and immersed in pleasure and futility. Let us closely examine the contents of the following Qur’ānic verses to not be annihilated by the destructive darkness of ignorance:

﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ﴾

“Soon, We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real.”¹

﴿وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِلْمُوقِنِينَ * وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا يُبَصِّرُونَ﴾

“In the earth are signs for those who have conviction and in your own souls [as well]. Will you not then perceive?”²

2) Now, let us scrutinize recorded traditions about knowing one’s self. The Commander of the Faithful ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭalib (‘a) says:

1. “The best of knowledge is knowledge of man and the self.”
2. “The best of wisdom is knowledge of the self or identity and appraisal of

¹ *Sūrat Fussilat* 41:53.

² *Sūrat al-Dhāriyāt* 51:20-21.

the self.”

3. “The best of wisdom is knowledge of the self. So, whoever knows the self attains wisdom and whoever is ignorant of his self is misguided.”
4. “I wonder how a person who is ignorant of his self can know God.”
5. “How can a person who is ignorant of his self be able to know others?”
6. “The ultimate ignorance for a person is ignorance of his self.”
7. “Whoever knows his self is free from matter and materiality.”
8. “Whoever knows his self knows his Lord.”
9. “Whoever knows his self attains a lofty station.”
10. “Whoever is ignorant of his self is more ignorant of others.”
11. “Whoever knows his self is more knowledgeable of others.”
12. “Whoever has gnosis of his self attains the highest level of gnosis and knowledge.”
13. “Whoever is ignorant of his self strays away from the path of salvation.”

Be careful, O seeker of truth! If you want to know the universe as it is, know yourself.

And examine again:

چیست دین؟ برخاستن از روی خاک تا که آگه گردد از خود جان پاک

What is religion? Rising from the face of the dust so that the pure soul may become aware of itself¹

- 3) Peace of mind, one of the honorable features of “rational life” can only be achieved with religion, science and philosophy (in the sense of wisdom). The importance of this merit lies in the fact that in order to cure ailments caused by different types of anxieties, nervousness, apprehensions, and inner contradictions, no expert can think of any remedy except leading a “rational life”. If humanity had only peacefully led a “rational life,” only God knows how its shameful history would have turned into something honorable. Because of the disgraceful affliction of most people with spiritual ailments,

¹. Muḥammad Iqbāl Lāhūrī, trans. Arthur J. Arberry, *Jawādnāmeh*, “Dīn wa Waṭān,” lines 1039-1040. [Trans.]

we have remained incapable of defining man and knowing his real nature!

4) It is only in the realm of the “rational life” that the feeling of unity in the performance of duty and observance of rights, human beings, regardless of race, group and nation, attain the highest level of principles and values, which most people still remember. Without taking a step toward the realm of “rational life,” humanity cannot resist the sword drawn by the wretched bloodthirsty oppressors, such as Cesare Borgia, Machiavelli, Genghis Khan, Nero, Caligula, Tamerlane, and Friedrich Nietzsche¹.

5) It is within the framework of the “rational life” that happiness and sadness, laughter and tears can be understood.

خنده از لطفت حکایت می کند
ناله از قهرت شکایت می کند

این دو پیغام مخالف در جهان
از یکی دلبر روایت می کند

6) Along the path of the “rational life,” man is not contented with the natural peculiarities of animalistic life, for as he gets older, he incessantly strives to increase his knowledge and movement toward perfection. Consider the nature of life from the viewpoint of a common individual which is nothing except eating, sleeping, anger, carnal desire, merriment, luxury, and feasting, all animalistic pursuits, and it is clear that the animal has no knowledge of the human status. Thus, it tends not to establish any link with the elements of progress and advancement.

Hence, we have to strive to know the nature of life from the viewpoint of a wary person and benefit from his knowledge. We will find that the differences between these two persons are greater than the differences between a human being and a stone! This is because the stone does not make any movement, but the person who spends his life eating and sleeping, is always engaged in struggling against his self that begins high and ends low. The basic peculiarity of the “rational life” is that so long as life and death have not reached the lofty station of “*Indeed my prayer and my worship, my life and my death are all for the sake of Allah, the Lord of all the worlds,*”² life must go on. This is the meaning of the “good life” (*hayāt tayyibah*) mentioned in the Qur’ān.

¹ Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900): a 19th-century German philosopher and classical philologist who wrote critical texts on religion, morality, contemporary culture, philosophy and science. [Trans.]

² *Sūrat al-An ‘ām* 6:162.

7) This merit which must be considered the greatest and most constructive after finding out the answers to the six questions, by means of the “rational life”, shall be called “curbing egoism”. It is an evident phenomenon throughout the history of human life that egoism assumes various forms and has been the source of corruptions, vices, tyranny, and confounding the truth with falsehood. It can be said with confidence that it is possible for all the volcanos on earth and other planets—if ever there are—to become totally inactive or dead but egoism is so ingrained in man’s being that it is impossible to uproot it in most people, except by putting an end to their lives! We must say that so long as the vicious disease of egoism is not cured by the “rational life” and self-consciousness, called “God-wariness” (*taqwā*) take its place, all the legal, moral, religious, political and cultural systems desired by human beings, will be like magnificent palaces built on the crater of a volcano.

Any religion, science or philosophy which is incompetent to materialize the “rational life” on account of not having the seven merits cannot do anything positive for mankind, except being used as a tool by profiteers and selfish individuals.

Conclusion

We can draw two very important conclusions from the mutual relationship between religion, science and philosophy:

First: The forms and elements of the “self” for the management of life cannot undermine the genuineness and immense power of this phenomenon, neither can the tools, elements, forms, and changes in the manifestations and instances of the three basic pillars of the “rational life”. In the same vein, the difference in environment, conditions and circumstances cannot question whatsoever the genuineness of sound intellection, conscience and intuition.

Second: We human beings have no right to give a final judgment on all issues related to the definition, identity, outcomes, and manifestations of the three great truths because the forms, manifestations and tools of “rational life” have different levels and dimensions at all times.

Q. Is there any contradiction among religion, science and philosophy as a means of acquiring wisdom?

“Rational life” is not only the ideal life for humankind but it also provides the answer to its problems in all dimensions of life, and it is the only

unifying factor of the three great truths, religion, science and philosophy. By “religion” we mean the set of beliefs, obligations, rights, and manners without which life has no foundation except vicious egoism, because of which, man is still contented with the cave-dwelling level of life, inspite of enormous advancement and progress in the expansion of the “cave,” the speed of movements and various adornments in it. What we mean by philosophy is no other than wisdom (*hikmah*), which can take man to the pinnacle of possible perfection with the two wings of knowledge and action.

What is Wisdom?

Wisdom means acquaintance and knowledge about the general foundations of the universe and preparedness to answer the questions about the variables in the universe (and the function of knowing them is assumed as philosophy (wisdom)). It is put into action along the path of “movement” for perfection. Wisdom deals with realities and not conventional concepts anchored in subjective understanding and justificative arguments.

Therefore, wisdom refers to the inalterable principles of gnosis (*ma'rifah*) which are not affected by the passage of time, diverse places and various sciences except in their instances, particular points and manifestations. This is while the main issues and principles of “formal” or “official” philosophies are abstractions of their respective periods and certain understandings of man and the world.

In this discourse, we shall mention some examples of the principles of eternal wisdom:

1. The reality of the world is not related to anyones mental perceptions although there is the interference of the perceiving elements in science, philosophy or any acquired knowledge.
2. The universe has come into being according to the sublime wisdom of God.
3. Every component of the universe subsists according to the law governing it. If there is no law governing the components of the universe, “nothing is a condition for anything” and “at every moment, everything is possible”.
4. Man enjoys a high status and noble values and is capable of existential perfection in this universe. The main focus of attention of the philosophers (*hukamā*) and mystics ('*urafā*') is for him to achieve the lofty goal of life which is higher than his own existence and the world of nature.

لطف شیر و انگیین عکس دل است هر خوشی را آن خوش از دل حاصل است
 پس بود دل جوهر و عالم عرض سایه دل چون بود دل را غرض

The deliciousness of milk and honey is the reflection of the (pure) heart: from that heart, the sweetness of every sweet thing is derived.

*Hence the heart is the substance, and the world is the accident: how should the heart's shadow (reflection) be the object of the heart's desire?*¹

5. It is an individual and collective obligation of all people to endeavor and struggle for the training and education of this noble creature, and prepare him to move along the “rational life”.

6. Scientific, intuitive, philosophical, and religious thinking about the universe is one of the primary obligations.

7. Individual relationship with God through the acts of worship is a philosophical necessity.

8. The fundamental beliefs are as follows:

- Belief in the existence of God, the Creator of the universe;
- The Loftiest Attributes of Perfection which solely belong to the Sacred Essence;
- The apostleship (*risālah*) of the great prophets and [the successorship of] the infallible Imāms for the propagation and interpretation of the laws and human rights which emanate from revelation and man’s primordial nature;
- Resurrection and eternal life;
- Belief in the leadership of the Messenger of Allah (ṣ) after the prophets of God and of the infallible Imāms (‘a) after the Messenger of Allah (ṣ);

9. Human dignity, honor and nobility that must be completely acknowledged in this life;

10. Responsible freedom;

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ’ddīn Rūmī*, Book 3, lines 2265-2266, p. 249. [Trans.]

11. Equality of all before the law;
12. The prescribed rights possessed by all human beings;
13. The criterion of nobility and honor of every person is related to the extent of perfection of his essence (*taqwā*);
14. Human beings endowed with the right of a worthwhile and improvable life by God.

These are examples of the basic principles of wisdom as well as those of the religion of God. So, unity and harmony between religion and philosophy as a means of wisdom is an axiomatic truth, to deny or doubt which has no basis except ignorance or spite.

Chapter 2 ***The Definition of Science and Its Salient Features***

What is Science?

If something in the mind of a person is totally discovered and is then completely identified, a perception of it is a scientific one; similar to the case of water, which consists of specific elements of oxygen and hydrogen.

Conditions of a Scientific Law

The terms “scientific law,” “scientific problem” or “according to science,” have diverse meanings. Sometimes, science is meant in its broadest sense to include even scientific theories and hypotheses. This notion can be seen very frequently in recent times. All discourses in theoretical physics, theoretical sociology and other theoretical fields particularly in theoretical social sciences make use of the word “scientific”. This is while they are examined for scientific studies and not that they really possess scientific standing. At times, a limited meaning of science is in the sense of an absolute discovery. Science, in its real sense, can determine the destiny and real direction of human life with respect to the four types of relationship, albeit, it is rarely understood in that sense. At present, three conditions of any scientific proposition are given. If we disregard those terms for a while, we will find the same, under different labels.

First Condition: Universality of the Law

In the domain of science, to identify the reality existing in a case, a subject is attributed with a word denoting universality. By doing so, the ambiguity of a subject can be avoided. Instead of the statement “Some substances consist of certain elements of oxygen and hydrogen,” the case is presented with a phrase that indicates universality such as “Water as a whole...”

Basis of the Universality of Scientific Propositions

As we have said in the book *Shinākht (Knowledge)*, pp. 101-107, this basis is of two types:

1) Induction and experimentation of all subjects of the case: For example, all types of animals or all human beings are generally the subject of a scientific proposition such as “All types of animals give birth to their offspring.” Of course, direct observation of most types of animals on earth is impossible. Yet, universality can be claimed and a proposition can be brought forth as a scientific one, although this particular negligence must be

mentioned for the researchers not to commit any error. Induction and experimentation of all members of a subject is neither possible nor needed. By knowing a subject in terms of its primary elements, we can give general propositions about the members of the subject. When we have learned the nature of water through all its primary elements, we can present it as the subject of a scientific proposition and say that all its members and manifestations with the exception of certain thematic features are such and such; for example, the various salts that are present in water bodies on the surface of the earth. In a nutshell, in order to establish a scientific proposition which encompasses all members of a subject, it is enough to correctly identify the subject. However, while stating a scientific proposition about the types of a genus, knowing the identity of the said genus is not enough; instead, we must investigate every type with all its salient features. For example, by knowing the general genus of animal as a creature with senses which gives birth to its offspring, we cannot have a general knowledge of the identity of the type of animal, such as a horse.

2) Abstract construction: Universality caused by abstract construction means mental activity creates an identity not requiring its manifestations; for example, mathematical numbers and operations, and geometrical problems and theorems. It is true that abstract construction in the minds initially requires actual observations to form number “two”; it is first necessary to see two stones, two persons or two trees, and to form an abstract circle, it is necessary to see a round vessel or container. However, after undergoing the initial stages, constructing the said identities does not require actual observations. It is for this reason that their generality is realized through the activity of mental construction. To conclude that four plus four equals eight ($4 + 4 = 8$) in normal mature minds does not require seeing a single case. Thus, if we assume that development of a mind is possible without undergoing the initial stages of observations, mathematical operations will also be possible without any contact with objective realities. In addition, in the process of mathematical operations, the human mind does not pay any attention to actual manifestations, which are the origin of abstraction of the units of those operations.

Generalization of a Scientific View

The universality of a proposition is required for the validity of a scientific law. We can explain the place of mind vis-à-vis a subject in a scientific process thus:

1. Mental preparedness to perceive a subject as motivated by factors we have explained in the first discourse. For this preparedness, one must keep in mind the essential conditions of the mind and the obstacles that may stand in the way of establishing a connection between the mind and the subject. For example, if the mind of the researcher does not regard as scientifically achievable a subject which it wants to identify scientifically, this perception about the subject is a mental obstacle that occupies a certain level of the researcher's mind and he has no option but to remove this obstacle first. For instance, in order to have an inclination to scientifically perceive a subject, a logical motive is definitely essential and without such a motive, the relationship between the mind and the subject will be superficial, and there will be no outcome except imagination and baseless suppositions.

2. In sustaining the duration of relationship, there must always be a kind of implicit mental activity, of which the researcher may possibly not be aware. We can call this activity proposition-formulation. For example, in studying an animal, we encounter tens of phenomena, movements and relations, each of which exists within the framework of specific laws. In other words, what we mean by investigation of animal-under-discussion is only the reaction of its member vis-à-vis heat. Thus, in order to realize this purpose, we can see the speed of the movements of the animal. Moreover, we can identify the fast from the slow movement. Meanwhile, we can also discern the reason behind those two types of movements although our main purpose is neither to identify the types of movement nor to discern the reason behind them. Yet, consciously or unconsciously, two types of proposition-formulation exist in our minds:

One is that one movement is faster than another, or this movement is slower than that movement. The other is that the reason behind the fast movement is the intense effect of the desire to escape which prompts the animal to move faster.

3. Benefiting from this mental law that the phenomenon which appears as an effect in the actual world shall definitely appear again with the repetition of the cause because this effect is not a phenomenon exclusive to the individual in the actual world. So, one must engage in abstraction and experimentation and scrutinize this effect in different conditions and circumstances.

4. If, by means of an all-embracing abstraction and experimentation, we can arrive at a general proposition applicable to all cases, we will find out the

general law governing those cases. Universality of the fourth stage is abstracted from the scientific relationship with the subject while all the cases prior to the fourth stage are essential for the commencement of a scientific course.

5. When a general law is arrived at by means of abstractions and experimentations, a number of phenomena will also be presented as conditions and obstacles to the purport of the law.

Second Condition: Predictability

Since every happening in the world of realities depends on certain conditions as well as the absence of impediments, the scientific laws which are grounded on those happenings are conditional, whether those conditions are explicitly stipulated in the text of the law, or not. We know that whenever the earth is situated between the sun and the moon, an eclipse will occur. This law depends on two conditions. One is that there must be no change to take place in the solar system. The other is that the earth must be situated between the sun and the moon. Given these two conditions, we can predict the occurrence of a lunar eclipse one night in the future. In the same manner, the placement of the earth between the sun and the moon is also a predictable phenomenon, given specific conditions. Of course, since this second condition bespeaks of the conformity of law with reality, this is not exclusive to the prediction of a future occurrence. By taking into account the identity of the law with all its conditions, we can also acquire scientific information of the past as well as the present. We say, for example, that pieces of evidence show that six months ago, the earth was situated between the sun and the moon for two hours. Therefore, we arrive at the definite conclusion that six months ago, a lunar eclipse occurred for two hours. Similarly, if the said condition exists now, then there is definitely a lunar eclipse.

Third Condition: Falsifiability

Falsifiability means inconsistency of a scientific proposition with all the possible phenomena. It is for this reason that it is said, "No scientific proposition is indifferent vis-à-vis all the phenomena in the world."

It seems that it is quite erroneous for researchers to set this third condition against the second condition and to present them as two separate conditions. This is because when a proposition is advanced in the form of a general law, it is not an abstract and indivisible truth. It is rather the subject of law, which

can be scrutinized elaborately, and its predicate and the relationship between the subject and the predicate depend on certain conditions and the absence of obstacles. These components, limitations and conditions have their respective contributions in the materialization of the law, just as by their materialization in a certain condition, one can acquire scientific information on the materialization of the purport of law. In the same manner, with the minimum absence of those components, limitations and conditions, one can also consider definite the inability of the purport of the law to be materialized. For example, let us analyse this law: "Every wise person is useful for his society."

The subject of this law can be broken down as follows:

- Person;
- His rational and conscientious maturity up to the degree of wisdom; and
- His readiness to make use of his wisdom in society;

The predicate of this law can be broken down as follows:

- The existence of society which accommodates wise activities;
- The types of existing usefulness, the most suitable of which the wise person makes use of or acts upon for society; and
- Social disorders stand in the way of acceptance of the usefulness of the wise person.

It is obvious that for the actual materialization of the usefulness of the wise person in society, the abovementioned conditions and the absence of obstacles are essential. As a result, we can predict the materialization of usefulness as a legal phenomenon with the abovementioned conditions. At the same time, we have to accept that with the absence of one of them such usefulness shall be invalid and not be materialized as a legal phenomenon. If all the abovementioned items are present but due to inner or outward defects, the wise person is not prepared to have a wise activity in his society, the said law lacks the required condition.

Fourth Condition: Repeatable and Duplicable

If the subject under consideration is an unrepeatable and unmultiplicable reality, it cannot be studied from the scientific point of view. Take, for example, the case of a work of art. Considering the motive of the artist and

his work's identity and manifestations, it can be repeated in no time and conditions. In this case, this work cannot be scientifically studied because it is a particular and specified phenomenon that cannot be the basis of abstraction of a general law or a case for conformity with the general law. As a result, studying the entire universe as a single unit, which cannot be repeated and multiplied, at least for us, it is beyond the scientific domain. In the same manner, studying the Essence and Being of God (not the principle of His existence), which can neither be repeated nor multiplied is a subject beyond science.

In addition to the explanation and argument we have given, this is a condition for a scientific proposition. The important point that must be emphasized here is that in the concrete and abstract world, no phenomenon can really be repeated or multiplied, and whatever is materialized is subjective, and in the parlance of logic, a real particular which it is impossible to repeat and multiply.

What we call “repetition” is a similar or parallel occurrence of phenomena in the concrete and abstract world. In reality, this occurrence is similar to that of the rays of light which because of their similarity in nature seem to be recurring, whereas in reality, the rays of light can never occur again or be multiplied. It must, therefore, be said that one of the conditions of a scientific proposition is that it is indicative of the occurrence of similar or parallel things in the world of realities. In fact, in a sense, we can say that the similarities in the comparison are not perfect, for in the words of Mawlawī (Rūmī),

تاكه مثلی و انمایم من تو را	متعدد نتشی ندارد این سرا
تا ز حیرانی خرد را وا خرم	هم مثال ناقصی دست آورم

This abode (the world) does not contain any form (that is) one (with any other form), so that I might show forth to you a similitude.

Still, I will bring to hand an imperfect comparison that I may redeem your mind from confusion.¹

The Jugglers' Display of the Alleged Conflict among Science, Religion and Philosophy

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu 'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 4, lines 423-424, p. 51. [Trans.]

The previous discourse proves the artificiality of the so-called conflict among religion, science and philosophy in the sense of wisdom. Now, we shall identify those who are responsible for displaying the said alleged conflict. It seems that there are some groups responsible for this baseless display of conflict, and there is only one group which really strives hard to find out the truth.

The *first group* refers to those who earn much pleasure in kindling the fire of conflict among people, especially among thinkers. Sometimes, the weapons in this confrontation are religion, science and philosophies, and at other times, political, cultural financial issues and problems.

The *second group* refers to those who kindle the fire of disputes among people, especially among experts, for social fame and an unwise goal. Therefore, let us assume that if the time comes when this group fails to create baseless conflict, they will conceive of other issues to create disagreements. It is the same work done by David Hume¹ and his likes!

The *third group* can be those who, without paying attention to the subject of dispute and without having knowledge of the existing cases pertaining to the subject, are willing to become tools in the hands of the contenders, expressing their views on the subject though totally ignorant of it! In social gatherings and sometimes even in universities around the world, such simple-minded individuals are needed to express an opinion about issues pertaining to social sciences, political schools of thought and parties. Such individuals can be utilized a lot, and it is possible that the subordinates of groups in such issues would utilize such helpless individuals as lifeless tools.

از مردم افتدۀ مدد جوی که این قوم با بی پر و بال دگراند

(Sā'ib Tabrīzī)

The *fourth group* consists of the modernists who exploit the notion of modernism (innovation and progress), which is so constructive, and they never want to exert efforts. In this regard, they suppose, for example, that the

¹ David Hume (1711-1776), Scottish historian and philosopher, who influenced the development of skepticism and empiricism, is considered one of the greatest skeptics in the history of philosophy. Hume thought that one's subjective perceptions never provide true knowledge of reality and one can know nothing outside of experience. Accordingly, even the law of cause and effect was an unjustified belief. [Trans.]

concept of time—millions of years ago, this very moment, or millions of years from now—has no concrete reality whatsoever because, accordingly, time is nothing but a mental spatiuum abstracted from motion—be it inward or outward. What is real is that the gradual increase of the creatures and phenomena in the plain of existence requires the spatiuum of motion that leads to the abstraction of time in the human mind. Modernism or innovation is not only so good but also, a necessity for the human mind, non-observance of which leads to stagnancy and man's detachment from the inward and outward reality of the concrete world. This principle of modernism is not only related to the essence of time, which allegedly has no concrete reality, but, we benefit from the abstraction of time as the conventional way of measuring the amount of increase of a temporal creature.

The *fifth group* consists of the truth-seekers who want to acquire information about the subjects of dispute and know the truth. Their efforts along this line only mean to know the reality under contention. In fact, as much as they can, they want to make use of that reality for themselves and other members of society. In this regard, one can cite the important views of some contemporary experts:

“The anxiety of the sensitive minds, the ardent desire to know the truth and discern the importance of a subject, must stir in us the most sincere feeling of sympathy. Whenever we consider the supposed functions of religion and science, we will see that it is not an exaggeration for us to regard the future trend of history as dependent on the decision of the present generation on the quality of relations between the two (religion and science). Here, we are facing two powers, the most formidable of all, and these two are different from the stimulation caused by our five senses and which influences human personality. But it is as if they oppose one another: one draws us to religious intuition while the other is that force which draws us toward exploratory observation as well as logical induction.”¹

Any conceptual issue which can be erroneous in social sciences may possibly be susceptible to Machiavellian political abuse, especially that which pertains to religion, science and philosophy, which have been encompassed by unscientific motives, and in particular, by political agenda in recent times.

¹. *Nāmeh-ye Farhang*, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 21.

If the state of affairs in our time were such that the study and research about religion and science were conducted with utmost neutrality, and were without motives caused by the vices of selfishness, domination, an important step would have been taken in knowing the real relationship between religion and science, and their excellent cooperation for man's attainment of felicity. Unfortunately, however, states of affairs exactly in opposition to this purity, sincerity and love for the truth can be observed. Nowadays, anybody or any group which has more material power by means of acquiring means and tools of media propaganda and technological prowess has more chance of achieving their objectives. They can utilize all means of domination in order to bring home their claims and to infuse and impose whatever they like to the simple-minded communities. They have sophisticated skill in handling artificial and irrational disputes and conflicts. The following points are worthy of note:

1. At the time of breaking down creatures into their component parts—including natural things, machines, and any man-made product or mental conception—we do not go into the detail of time which we conventionally divide into second, minute, hour, and the like. For example, when dismantling a machine or demolishing a factory—although it supposedly took fifteen years from the time of manufacturing or building it up to the time of its dismantlement or demolition—even a second from the said fifteen years cannot be found in it as a concrete entity.
2. In a certain magazine, there is an article by A. Bultman with this title: “Science for Sale or Experts at the Service of Technology and Politics.”¹
3. An article by Schmidt Hals has the following title: “Wrong Attitude of Researchers: A Study of Vital Medical Research Works in Comparing the Laws in Two Currently Advanced Countries.”²
4. A three-page article by Dirg Furger in the same magazine has this title: “The Researcher as Fraud in Science.”³

¹. *Bildervinshakht* (?) (1994), no. 2.

². *Ibid.*

³. *Ibid.* (1996).

5. A two-page article by Prof. Von Whitsku is entitled “Wrong Understandings of the Views of Darwin.”¹

6. A book entitled “A Collection of Interesting Errors for the Public,” mentions 500 errors that include direct or indirect scientific errors. This book is written in 1996 by two German professors named Walter Kremer and Guts Turnker (?) and it is one of the second prize winners.²

7. A book titled “How Science Was at Fault” written by Herman Armin, a German author of the history of science.³

8. Murray Gell-Mann, winner of the Noble Prize in Physics in 1969 said, thus: “That there has been much delay in presenting the suitable philosophical explanation to quantum (physics) is because of the fact that Neils Bohr⁴ said, “Everything in explaining quantum mechanics of the past 50 years has been done already.”⁵

Notwithstanding his indisputable prominence and high reputation in science, Bohr was not supposed to deceive humanity with the false nature of science, which the Machiavellians try to utilize in different societies.

How do those, who present an artificial contradiction between religion, science and philosophy, explain the existence of such personalities as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Muḥammad ibn Ṭurkhān Fārābī, Abū ‘Alī ibn Sīnā, Abū Rayhān Bīrūnī, Ibn Rushd, Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī,⁶ Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlawī (Rūmī), ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Khaldūn, Descartes,⁷ Leibniz,¹ Helmholtz,² Max Planck, Albert Einstein, and

¹. *Ibid.*

². *Ibid.* (1996), no. 11.

³. *Wie die Wissenschaft Ihre Unschuld Verlor* (Germany), 1981.

⁴. Niels Henrik David Bohr (1885 – 1962): a Danish physicist who received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1922, and his son, Aage Bohr (who grew up to be an important physicist) in 1975. [Trans.]

⁵. *Bildervinshakht* (?) (1996), no. 6.

⁶. Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī, better known as Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (597-672 AH/1200-73): a Persian polymath and prolific writer—an astronomer, biologist, chemist, mathematician, philosopher, physician, physicist, scientist, theologian, and *marja’ al-taqlid* (religious authority). [Trans.]

⁷. René Descartes (1596-1650): French mathematician and the founding father of modern philosophy. His theory of knowledge starts with the quest for certainty, for an indubitable starting-point or foundation on the basis alone of which progress is

Weizsäcker,³ and hundreds of others?

In fact, according to Max Planck in his book *Where is Science Going?*, “Great thinkers of all ages have been religious men although they may not have feigned religiosity.”⁴

Is It Science or Chicanery?

Stanislav Andreski, a professor of sociology at the University of Reading, United Kingdom, has written a book entitled “*Social Sciences and Sorcery*” (1972), in which he accuses the majority of social scientists of pretentious and nebulous verbosity, interminable repetition of platitudes and disguised propaganda. At least 95 per cent of research is indeed re-search for things found long ago and many times since. Without dwelling on general points, he substantiates his claims. He accuses Talcott Parsons, known to be the father of modern sociology, of “extreme vagueness,” saying that he presents “the simplest of truth as an incomprehensible, intricate problem.” That which particularly irritates Andreski is Parsons’ “voluntaristic theory of action”.

In a nutshell, “Translated from the tenebrous language in which it is couched, this theory amounts to saying that in order to understand why people act as they do, we must take into account their wishes and decisions, the means at their disposal and their beliefs about how the desired effects can be produced.” As Andreski mockingly comments, “The emergence of this piece of knowledge amounted, no doubt, to an important step in the mental development of mankind, but it must have occurred some time during the Paleolithic Age, as Homer and the Biblical prophets knew all about it.”

possible. This is eventually found in his celebrated ‘Cogito ergo sum’ which means “I think therefore I am.” [Trans.]

¹. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 – 1716): a polymath German philosopher and mathematician who wrote in multiple languages, primarily in Latin (~40%), French (~30%) and German (~15%). [Trans.]

². Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von Helmholtz (1821 – 1894): a German physician and physicist who made significant contributions to several widely varied areas of modern science. [Trans.]

³. Carl Friedrich Freiherr von Weizsäcker (1912 – 2007): a German physicist and philosopher. [Trans.]

⁴. Max Planck, *Ilm beh Kujā Mīrawad?* (*Where is Science Going?*), trans. Ahmad ārām, p. 235.

In the same way, Andreski also criticizes other prominent scholars such as Paul Lazarsfeld,¹ his colleague and the famous author of the controversial book entitled “*Personal Influence*”. Regarding him, Andreski says, “After painstakingly studying a plethora of tables and formulas, we will reach the point of a common discovery (which is, of course, expressed in the most intricate way) that individuals earn pleasure in drawing others’ attention. Or, a person is under the influence of those whom he interacts with... Of course, these are axiomatic points which my grandmother used to mention during my childhood.”

Another famous personality who is subjected to criticism is Skinner,² the Harvard University professor, who, according to Andreski, has seriously misinterpreted human nature, and by advancing forth the most trivial subject “real portrait of the human mind,” he encourages irresponsibility and nihilism, which ultimately “turns influential in the social lives of people”.

Without disregarding the importance of their works in promoting fundamental self-consciousness in real life’s situations, Andreski describes Freud, Adler³ and Jung with most respect, as devoid of “the sense of coherence and proportionality. And in his conclusion from the research findings of such scholars, he writes, “We linger on the vacuum between quantitative vulgarities and flight in the pleasant worlds, though devoid of order and rule.”

The most important source of concern by Andreski are these “quantitative vulgarities” which can be regarded as one of the distinctive features of social sciences. In his opinion, the truly important human traits can never be measured, and most of those that can, are inconclusive.

In criticizing the experts in behavioral sciences, Andreski points out that by using “quasi-mathematical arrangements,” they portray their works as “scientific” and one is astonished as to what expression he must have. For

¹. Paul Felix Lazarsfeld (1901 – 1976): one of the major figures in 20th-century American sociology and the founder of Columbia University's Bureau of Applied Social Research. [Trans.]

². Burrhus Frederic Skinner (1904 – 1990): an American behaviorist, author, inventor, social philosopher and poet. [Trans.]

³. Alfred Adler (1870 – 1937): an Austrian medical doctor, psychotherapist, and founder of the school of individual psychology. [Trans.]

example, Claude Lévi-Strauss,¹ a famous anthropologist, describes the distinction between two animals by the equation “panther = ant-eater”. If this formula is expressed in its mathematical meaning, the meaning of the statement is as follows: a panther is equivalent to the number “one” divided by “ant-eater” whose outcome is nothing but, witnessing the magical light of fiction and seeing its various colors, one would get melancholic.

Another example, extracted from mathematics and used by numerous sociologists, is the letter “n” which is “so melancholic”. This letter represents the word “need” used by David McClelland,² Harvard University professor of psychology to portray different needs, and Andreski sarcastically says that for reading this subject, man has a new “need” called “prevalence of chicanery”.

Andreski, by mentioning the names of social scientists, accuses them of hardly dedicating themselves to the search for truth and being more attached to money, fame and recognition. Of course, given the method they have adopted, they could attain their desire at once. According to him, in social sciences “there are dim-witted and low-educated individuals who become aware that they can be known as researchers and professors”. Then, to actually prove his claim, Andreski gave a philological examination to social sciences students in Great Britain and proved that “these students, compared to other students, including those of engineering and physics, would get lower marks”! Andreski’s goal in publishing the book is to warn readers to be very meticulous in reading such works and not be deceived by the conventional pleonasm, formulas, tables, and discoveries of the “high-ranking” writers.³

¹. Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908 – 2009): a French anthropologist and ethnologist, and has been called, along with James George Frazer, the “father of modern anthropology”. [Trans.]

². David C. McClelland (1917 – 1998): an American psychological theorist noted for his work on achievement motivation as reflected in a number of his writings from the 1950s until the 1990s. [Trans.]

³. Stanislav Andreski, “*Social Sciences and Sorcery*” as translated [into Persian] by the esteemed and learned friend Muḥammad Jawād Sahlānī, *Iqtiṣād wa Andisheh* Journal.

Chapter 3

Stability and Change in Science and Religion

Q. Can stability and change in science and religion mean the same?

In one of the most substantial articles, titled “From Alfred Whitehead,” the author maintains that both religion and science have dimensions of stability and change. Since each of them belongs to a different realm, the fusion of these two dimensions in religion does not lead to contradiction. These two dimensions are as follows:

1. General principles and basic foundations of religion and science which are inalterable truths, and
2. The manifestations of those inalterable truths and the quality and quantity of the understanding about them

At the outset, we must state a very important distinction between religion and science, which is that change in religion is based upon the changes that take place in the manifestations of laws, religious duties and rights, but not in the religious laws, duties and rights themselves. For example, prior to the emergence of technological advancements in human societies, if the movement from one point to another—let us say, for transporting goods or for religious travels such as journey to Mecca—by means of four-footed animals is incumbent, after the emergence of technological advancements, movement or transportation through advanced means of transportation will become incumbent. So is the case of agricultural machineries, industrial machines, different methods of business transaction, modes of training and education, performance of the acts of worship, etc.

The inalterable and general principles of the abovementioned matters never undergo any changes; for example, preservation of decent life, establishing connection with God, and subsistence on the basis of ardent desire for perfection which leads to the acquisition of *taqwā* (God-wariness or protection of the self from pollutions and impurities). This is while the accidental changes and transformations in any branch of science lead to the transformation of the said branch. This is because the nature of science implies understanding of the actual realities by means of sensory perceptions, mental activities, experimental activities, and other intensive and extensive ways. It is clear that even this understanding, discovery, affirmation, and negation are in the process of change. This is while the real

essence of religion is different from the understanding and interpretation of the textual sources and references of religion, although perception of the principles of religion becomes possible through understanding and knowing it from its textual sources and references.

Notwithstanding the differences arising from the variety and limitation of viewpoints, devices, and orientations in the realm of science, it is totally clear that sometimes, by means of sensory perceptions, intellection and other modes of communication, we are more meticulous in their complete discovery. Without doubt, such connection with the world of nature and its manifestations—if it is not the best—is certainly one of the best ways of connecting with them. Our main problem, however, is that this way of establishing connection with the realities of the universe is very limited and insufficient in comparison to what we can be able to know. If man, from the beginning of his life on planet earth, would have been contented with the little information he could acquire through the limited means and considered “science” whatever he could see with his eyes or perceive with the other senses, he could not have made any progress in science, technology and social sciences. Therefore, man cannot rely only on his limited observations, he cannot imprison himself within the state of cave-dwelling.

If the prominent scholars had pondered on the inner forces and mental factors that made them strive hard to understand the causes, conditions and impediments of phenomena, our scientific and civilizational advancements would have been beyond description. If the likes of Ibn Sīnā would have contented themselves only with their observations about the “four elements”¹ called water, fire, earth, and wind, that they could observe, could the identification and elaboration of all the main elements in the Mendeleev² Table (or the periodic table of the chemical elements) be possible?

We have to point out that in this discourse we will take Islam as the model,

¹ According to the cosmology of Aristotle (384-322 BCE) as expounded in his *On the Heavens* and *Physics*, the universe or cosmos is divided into the earthly or sublunary region and the heavens. In the sublunary region, substances are made up of the four elements, viz. earth, water, air, and fire. See Aristotle, “Physics and On the Heavens,” in Jonathan Barnes (ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). [Trans.]

² Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev (1834 – 1907): a Russian chemist and inventor credited as being the creator of the first version of the periodic table of elements. [Trans.]

being the culmination of the Abrahamic faiths, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Sabeanism, and even those religions, which share general principles and fundamental beliefs with the Abrahamic Creed.

The most common and fundamental principle which all Abrahamic Faiths adhere to is the principle to which God has ordered the Holy Prophet (s) to invite the followers of all religions so as to have a common platform of actions:

﴿فُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلْمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَا تَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوْلُوا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

“Say, ‘O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allah, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that we will not take each other as lords besides Allah’. But if they turn away, say, ‘Be witnesses that we are muslims’.”¹

The truths we will set forth as inalterable principles of religion are traceable to the principle of tawhīd (Oneness of Allah) and negation of any partner for Him:

1. General Principles and Inalterable Fundamentals of Religion

The existence of God necessitates these general principles:

1. God, the Glorious, who is perfect, self-sufficient, all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-wise, has created the universe based on wisdom and good purpose.
2. It is impossible for a human being to occupy a lofty status and nature without the goal he must achieve through correct training, learning and searching. Negation of the lofty goal of human life is tantamount to the waiving of all human principles and values as well as negation of the wisdom and bounty of God.
3. Man can know God in two ways. The first is by observing the orderliness of the external universe, the motion of matter, the choice of a particular path of motion, and the emergence of the phenomenon of life from matter, and observing the celestial world through advanced technology. The second is the inward way of man’s pure nature and clear intuition. The advantage the

¹. *Sūrat al ‘Imrān* 3:64.

inward way has over the outward way is that this way actualizes the manifestation of God in man's being.

4. Without accepting the Day of Resurrection and eternal life, no principle and value can ever be established by man. All the self-sacrifices in the way of reforming the individual and society done on the basis of values cannot be analyzed and interpreted as anything other than imprudence of the highest order by those who do not believe in the above!

5. Performance of acts of worship is essential in order to be situated in the Axis of Absolute Perfection although religions differ with each other with regards to the quantity and quality of these acts of worship. There is no phenomenon similar to the acts of worship for this life-giving philosophy of being situated in the Axis of Absolute Perfection.

6. Human beings are obliged to do good deeds, whose criterion is the material and spiritual welfare of the people.

7. Human beings must observe the rights of individuals and groups in society as well as maintain proper management. In the same manner, they must also give utmost importance to the observation of their own rights. Therefore, just as individuals are not supposed to harm others, they are equally not supposed to harm themselves, physically and spiritually. From the religious perspective, no person is allowed to corrupt himself being free, commit suicide, undermine his honor and dignity, or commit any sin.

8. The movement anchored in justice, equity and fairness is always at loggerheads with the selfishness of the powerful, hedonists and lascivious, so, without God's order to initiate this movement, no guarantee for its realization can be given. As such, religion is needed to give meaning to these matters. The following point brought forth by Jean-Jacques Rousseau bespeaks of an eternal truth concerning the physical and spiritual nature of man. He says,

“In order to discover the best laws which are useful to the nations, there is a need for the Universal Intellect that knows all human desires but has no desire of Its own (i.e. not corrupted by any desire) and has no relation at all with nature (i.e. immune from its contamination) while knowing it very well. Its felicity should not be related to us but is willing to help us attain felicity... Based on what has been said,

only the gods could duly bring out laws for the people.”¹

9. Religion can never limit itself to organizing the social life of individuals although it is one of its functions. Proper organization of social life through rights and laws is one of the most important elements in preparing society to benefit from religion.

10. The great prophets and their rightful successors and executors of will have two divine stations and designations:

One is to propagate the laws, duties and rights set by God on the basis of revelation received by the prophets. The other is the supervision and management of society.

Revolutionary societies are constantly in need of a great leader in order to protect the revolution from corruption and decadence. In the same manner, in order to preserve the fundamentals of the advanced laws, duties, rights and morality of society, a religious society is constantly in need of a leader with excellent skills in social management and whose orders are accepted because he qualifies as a religious leader.

11. The implementation of laws that are wholesome and called “moral precepts” is essential. In contrast to some social and philosophical schools, whose acceptability is natural and conventional, the bedrock of morality in religion is the will and wisdom of God. Religion has set forth inalterable laws, rights and duties whose origins are permanent needs of man; for example, the acts of worship and the prohibition of whatever is physically and spiritually harmful to man.²

2. Constantly Changing Variables in Religion

General manifestations are expressions of inalterable truths stemming from the pure and permanent needs of human beings.

From a broader perspective, we must say that the religion of Islam is “adherent” in harmonizing life with the above items (general subjects, cases and manifestations) except in cases of the acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and the like. Islam considers whatever increases man’s knowledge

¹. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Social Contract*, trans. Ghulām-Ḥusayn Zārakzādeh, 3rd printing, p. 81.

². For detailed information about the alterable and inalterable variables in religion, see Muḥammad Taqī Ja‘fari, *Tarjumeh wa Tafsīr-e Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 24, pp. 243-308.

and dominance over the world of nature and has a role to play in preparing the means to a wholesome life (i.e. rational life), as essential and obligatory to utilize. For example, different kinds of medical treatment, putting up educational institutions (from primary school to university) and laboratories, means of transportation, technological devices whose outputs are essential and useful for a wholesome life. Regarding products, which bring about physical and spiritual harm to man, such as, narcotics drugs and other harmful substances, Islam has no positive view about them and wages a serious campaign to uproot them.

3. General Principles and Inalterable Foundation of Science

Like religion, science has a set of general and fundamental principles which are inalterable and are not open to changes and modification in their nature, some of which are as follows:

1. Following a scientific proposition with sound sensory perceptions to the extent necessary;
2. The senses, because of the limitation, specifics and conditions of their activity, only show the truth within the scope of their perception and give conclusions according to the existing conditions and circumstances.

Some say, “It is true that we cannot have real knowledge of the things per se through our natural senses, structural peculiarities, and temporal and spatial standpoints, but very accurate instruments (microscope, telescope) which have been made for extensive and intensive studies in science can facilitate our connection with reality.”

It is true that those instruments render us significant help in establishing connection with realities, but they cannot decrease the limitations of our understanding. From the ultimate perspective of science, even if the existing instruments become more accurate, still they cannot show us reality as it is. This is because every instrument has its own limitations and cannot show all dimensions of reality. For this reason, the leading philosophers of the East, especially the Muslim philosophers, have a consensus of opinion that we do not have the capability of real knowledge (ultimate point), and as human beings, our task is to know things by their most distinctive features. Şadr al-Muta'allihīn Shīrāzī (Mullā Şadrā) categorically defines philosophy as “the knowledge of the truths, to the extent possible and feasible to man”.

3. The universe which science is supposed to discover has an external reality and is not a product of our thinking.

4. It is true that the manner of scientific connection with things depends on the orientation, willpower and inclination of human beings. For example, in the world of nature, there are very important forces and man can identify those forces through scientific ways and utilize them for the realization of his goals. But, whether these forces can be utilized to organize and reform his life or to annihilate him depends on his choice. Unfortunately, concerning this choice made by man, no anthropologist worth his name can talk without being embarrassed. It is clear that science is bereft of values, it can never pay attention to the cries of those who are weltering in their own blood in the cities and deserts or, the violation of the rights of the weak, except when observing those rights is deemed a value in science.

5. The scientific movement is embedded in man's nature without which man's stagnation is not only definite but it also necessitates retrogression. What is more important is that knowledgeable and gifted individuals with a conscience, scientific consciousness, dedication, and a sense of responsibility should manage the benefits of scientific discoveries. Without this management, historical suicide is the definite outcome predicted in the Vancouver Conference (?) by the prominent scholars of the world.

4. Change and Development in Science in the Course of Time

Here, we shall quote the statement of one of the greatest scientific figures in contemporary time. Alfred North Whitehead, known to most scientists and philosophers says, "Science is even more variable than theology. No scientist can accept the views of Galileo,¹ Newton² and even scientific views of the past ten years as inalterable and non-modifiable." Therefore, the difference in interpreting religious sources must not be deemed a justification to undermine the firmness of its general principles and whatever stems from the permanent needs of man.

Apart from religion and science, not all the interpretations of the intellect ('aql)—in spite of having correct axiomatic principles and essential propositions—are also acceptable to the authorities.

¹. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642): an Italian physicist, mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher who played a major role in the Scientific Revolution by supporting Copernicanism, among many others. [Trans.]

². Isaac Newton (1643-1727): an English physicist, mathematician, astronomer, natural philosopher, alchemist, and theologian whose best-known discoveries are the laws of motion and universal gravitation as expounded in his 1687 magnum opus *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (usually called the *Principia*). [Trans.]

Chapter 4

The Relationship of Science and Philosophy with Metaphysics

One of the most debated propositions in the realm of science is that without the acceptance of observable transcendental realities, scientific matters will never know the realities of things, and the desire to know which is firmly embedded in man. There are numerous reasons for this incapability:

1. The interference of the elements of perception on the “perceived thing”. These elements of perception include the natural senses of man and extremely advanced instruments essential for the extensive and intensive knowledge of the realities in the universe.
2. The goals of a researcher who definitely strives hard to know the dimensions of things.
3. The relationship of all creatures with one another admits that if there are unknown among them, it is enough that it is impossible to know them.

The combination of the first and second elements makes this immortal saying, “In the great stage play of existence, we are both performers and spectators,” to be recognized as the most correct principle about knowledge since the time of the Chinese philosopher Laozi.

4. The philosophers of the past, both in the East and the West, have acknowledged that we do not know the real nature of things; rather, our knowledge is a product of logical differentia and genera, which are special merits of things over one another.
5. It can be said that all experts with a profound worldview will become aware of the problem of knowing the realities when they confess this with utmost perspicacity and intellectual humility. In order to explain and prove this confession, we shall quote some statements of contemporary scholars and philosophers.

In this discourse, we shall examine the views of the most famous Eastern and Western philosophers about “the essential nature of the world of nature”. It is necessary for us to quote the actual expressions for the sake of research. Statements sometimes include other issues other than those related to “the essential nature of the world of nature” which may be unacceptable to us. As

such, the esteemed readers must bear in mind that quoting statements that include those issues does not mean accepting them, because our purpose, as we have said, is to study and examine “the essential nature of the world of nature”.

Q. Why should we cite the famous views of the scholars, philosophers and distinguished figures of the East and West while dealing with the harmony of religion, science and philosophy?

The status that a person is born with is an essential status, neither all-dimensional nor permanent an accidental status which has been gradually nurtured. The birth status, upbringing and primary training of man cannot imprison and deprive him of the capability to grow and advance to worldwide prominence. Great personalities, like other individuals, belong to a specific place. Yet, their degree of personal excellence is such that they can duly be called “citizens of the world”. Do the Westerners not say that Plato alone is history? Do the Easterners not say that Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī is “the teacher of humanity and the eleventh intellect” (*mu'allim al-bashar wa 'l-'aql al-hādī 'ashar*)? Yes, they really mean what they say. Therefore, quoting the views of prominent and pioneering figures of religion, philosophy and science in every region is actually quoting the views of a person who is the son of humanity and whose homeland is the world.

First reason: Sometimes, citing the views of prominent figures proves that the issue in question is so important that it has drawn the attention of those figures, because it is correct and constructive work.

Second reason: There are also times when citing the views of others substantiates the reply that comes to the mind of a thinker. In other words, it is for the sake of religion that the certainty of the said thinker might increase, or those who are interested in his view pay more attention to it.

Third reason: Common people are under the influence of the views of great and famous personalities. Sometimes, this feeling is so strong that all the mental powers of those people are under their influence. It is at this juncture, that the scientific, philosophical, religious, and cultural authorities of society bear the heavy responsibility of preventing people to treat their figures' views as absolute. During the Middle Ages in the West and in some places in the East, if only the authorities had prevented the thinkers from going to extremes while appraising the philosophers of ancient Greece, human

knowledge would have attained a higher and more profound level.

Fourth reason: In the course of history, the emergence of great civilizations has drawn the attention of nations that interact with the people of those civilizations; for example, the Mesopotamian Civilization, Byzantium Civilization, Islamic Civilization, and Western Civilization in recent times.

It is clear that the elements that constitute civilization are diverse; for example, economy, arts, science, philosophy, religion, morality, industry, politics, law, and culture in its general sense. Unfortunately, in appraising these elements, mankind has not been able to adopt the moderate and logical way as is supposed. In the same manner, it has always failed to find out the ultimate cause of the emergence, advancement, decline, and fall of civilizations.

For example, nowadays, the technological element of civilization in the West is highly praised and considered absolute and not only majorly reduced the advanced, constructive religion, morality and culture but also expelled social sciences from the scene! It is due to this technological advancement and progress that the West hold destructive supremacy over other cultures and civilizations in all scientific, philosophical, religious, and cultural issues. This undue supremacy has made their correct set of scientific, philosophical, religious, cultural, and moral subjects unquestionably credible for the common people, particularly the unsuspecting youth. Thus, the dedicated scholars consider themselves duty-bound to cite the acceptable views of outstanding figures in the technological advanced societies to draw the attention of such people and awaken their own society.

Fifth reason: To call the attention of those who are new in the arena of knowledge and learning to the important fact that if personalities from technologically advanced countries have deviated from the established principles and values in society, there are other personalities, in the same countries, who believe in and live by those principles and values. Citing views with this purpose is something very useful and valuable.

The Views of Some Ancient Philosophers on the Essential Reality of Things

1. Plato's Parable: Plato believes that supernatural and intelligible truths are the origin of the universe and that all the creatures we can perceive in the

world and with which we interact, are shadows of those truths.¹ Both Plato and Kips (?) agree that the parts that constitute the natural bodies are small and diverse.²

2. Thales' "Primary Water": From India, California and Mesopotamia up to Thales³ who said, "Every physical transformation needs living elements."⁴

3. Samkhya:⁵ A universal soul or a world originates from spirits, which are limitless and peerless.⁶

4. Hindu concept of the unity of beings: Bashan is "the divine truth of which all creatures of the natural world are parts." (That is the Hindu concept of the unity of all beings and a number of philosophers prior to Socrates.)⁷

5. Anaximenes,⁸ Diogenes Laertius⁹ and Archelaus¹⁰ regard air as the truth of beings.¹¹

6. Heraclides:¹² "The fire (essential reality of the world of nature) and the

¹. Plato, *Jumhūriyyat (Republic)*, trans. Ḥannā Khabbāz, pp. 183-187.

². Aristotle, *Kawn wa Fasād (On the Generation and Corruption)*, Part 8, para. 9, p. 182, as quoted from Plato's *Timaeus*.

³. Sāmī ‘Alī Nishār, *Nishā’ al-Din*, pp. 194-195.

Thales of Miletus (c. 640 – c. 546 B.C.): Greek philosopher and scientist; recognized as the founder of Greek philosophy or first who made name as a philosopher; one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece. [Trans.]

⁴. Muḥammad Farid Wajdī, *Barkharābeh-hā-ye Māddī*, p. 27.

⁵. Samkhya, also Sankhya, Simkhya, or Sínhya: one of the six schools of classical Indian philosophy. [Trans.]

⁶. Dr. Muḥammad Ghilāb, *Mushkilat al-Ulūhiyyah*, p. 165.

⁷. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

⁸. Anaximenes of Miletus (585 – 528 BCE): an Archaic Greek Pre-Socratic philosopher active in the latter half of the 6th century BC. [Trans.]

⁹. Diogenes Laertius (c. 3rd century CE): a biographer of the Greek philosophers and whose surviving *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* is one of the principal surviving sources for the history of Greek philosophy. [Trans.]

¹⁰. Archelaus (5th century BCE): an Ancient Greek philosopher and a pupil of Anaxagoras. [Trans.]

¹¹. Oswald Kulpeh (?), *Muqaddameh-ye Falsafeh (An Introduction to Philosophy)*, p. 165.

¹². Heraclides Ponticus (c. 390 BC – c. 310 BC), also known as Herakleides and Heraklides of Pontus: a Greek philosopher and astronomer who lived and died at

Logos (the Intellect extended in the world) [constitute God].”¹

7. Pythagoras² has mentioned a number and a single essence as the origin of all beings and numbers without defining it.³

8. Democritus:⁴ “Truths are unobservable. Natural bodies consist of tiny particles.” In defining these particles, Democritus has used the word “Idhus” (?) or “Idulun” (?) which is used for abstract truths.⁵

9. Anaxagoras⁶ has brought forth four things: (1) air,⁷ (2) dust,⁸ (3) primary matter,⁹ and (4) various elements.¹⁰

10. Stoicism:¹¹ The Stoics regard matter as the perfect abode or life.¹² Physically, the Stoics believe that Nature has been created from two origins: the active and passive substances.¹³

Heraclea Pontica, now Karadeniz Ere li, Turkey. [Trans.]

^{1.} Yusuf Karam, *Tārīkh-e Falsafeh-ye Yūnānī*, p. 87; ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, *Kharīf al-Fikr al-Yūnānī*, p. 87.

^{2.} Pythagoras of Samos (c. 672-497 B.C.): the founder of Pythagoreanism, a philosophical, mathematical, moral and religious school, one of whose basic principles was that the substance of things is ‘number’ and that all phenomena can be understood in mathematical ratios. [Trans.]

^{3.} Aristotle, *Mā Ba ‘d al-Tabā‘ah (Metaphysics)*, part 5.

^{4.} Democritus of Abdera (c. 460-370 B.C.): famous in Muslim philosophy for his theory of atoms; generally considered to be the founder of Greek atomism and also of the notion of empty space. [Trans.]

^{5.} Ridā Tawfiq, *Qāmūs-e Falsafeh (Philosophical Dictionary)* under “Democritus”.

^{6.} Anaxagoras (c. 500 BC – 428 BC): a Pre-Socratic Greek philosopher. [Trans.]

^{7.} Aristotle, *Kitāb-e Nafs*, p. 14.

^{8.} Oswald Kulpeh, *Madkhal-e Falsafeh*, p. 156.

^{9.} *Ibid.*

^{10.} Aristotle, *Kawn wa Fasād (On the Generation and Corruption)*, p. 108.

^{11.} Stoicism: a school of Hellenistic philosophy founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium in the early 3rd century BC, and maintains that destructive emotions resulted from errors in judgment. [Trans.]

^{12.} ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, *Kharīf al-Fikr al-Yūnānī*, pp. 27-28.

^{13.} Andre Carlson, *Mārk Awrilyūs – Falāsefeh-ye Buzurg (Marcus Aurelius – The Great Philosophers)*, trans. Kāzim ‘Imādi.

11. Parmenides:¹ “The Intelligent One is the origin and truth of all beings.”²
12. Euclides of Megara³ agrees with Parmenides that the essence of things is an indivisible one.⁴
13. St. Bonaventure:⁵ St. Bonaventure agrees with the Augustinians that creatures are composed of essence and being, primary matter and form... and that the primary matter has the primary particles.⁶
14. Empedocles:⁷ He believed that water and fire, earth and wind, love and hatred were forces of attraction and repulsion.⁸ The other recorded view of Empedocles is that the primary substance of things is ether, which cannot be corrupted and it is assumed that all realities are created from small particles of countless ether.⁹
15. Neoplatonism:¹⁰ “The Truth of the universe is living.”¹¹

¹. Parmenides of Elea (fl. early 5th century BCE): an ancient Greek philosopher who was the founder of the Eleatic school of philosophy. [Trans.]

². *Al-Tahqiq fī Milisyūs wa Iksinūfīn wa Gharghyīs*, p. 274 (as quoted from Aristotle, *Kawn wa Fisid* (*On the Generation and Corruption*)).

³. Euclides of Megara (450 ? – 374 BCE): Greek Eleatic philosopher, contemporary of Plato, and like him, disciple of Socrates; founder of the Megarian school. [Trans.]

⁴. *Qissat al-Falsafat al-Yūnāniyyah*, p. 136.

⁵. St. Bonaventure (1221 – 1274), born John of Fidanza: an Italian medieval scholastic theologian and philosopher. [Trans.]

⁶. Dr. Yusuf Karam, *Tārikh al-Falsafat al-Urūbiyyah fī 'l-'Aṣr al-Wasaṭ* (*The History of European Philosophy in the Middle Ages*), p. 47.

⁷. Empedocles, known to Muslim philosophers by other Arabic variants of his name: Abidqulis, Abidhqulis, etc. (c. 490 – c. 435 BCE): a pre-Socratic philosopher, physicist, physician and social reformer, who postulated the existence of the four elements or roots out of the mixture of which all things came to be, love and hate being the cause of motion and so of the mixing of these elements. [Trans.]

⁸. Aristotle, *Kitāb-e Nafs*, p. 16.

⁹. Khwājah Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Muqaddimah Bī' al-Nafs Bad Fanā' al-Habsah*.

¹⁰. Neoplatonism: the modern term for a school of religious and mystical philosophy that took shape in the 3rd century CE, based on the teachings of Plato and earlier Platonists, with its earliest contributor believed to be Plotinus, and his teacher Ammonius Saccas. [Trans.]

¹¹. Dr. Muḥammad Ghulāb, *Mushkilat al-Ulūhiyyah*, p. 125 (as quoted from the book *ūpīnīshid-e Brahman*, p. 274).

16. Zeno of Elea:¹ “The essence of the Real Being is still and motionless.”²
17. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus:³ “The brightness of the sun does not have more than one existence although it is indefinitely dispersed and shines over walls, mountains and other places.” And it is only one entity although it is dispersed in an indefinite number of specific natures and bodies. “And an Intelligent Spirit does not have more than one being notwithstanding outward divisions. Intelligent beings always benefit from this single and exclusive Intelligent and each of them is mutually related because of this benefit...”⁴

Muslim philosophers and scholars;

- (18) Ḥusayn ibn ‘Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā (Avicenna),
- (19) Muḥammad ibn Ṭurkhān Fārābī,
- (20) Bahmanyār,⁵
- (21) Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā Rāzī,⁶
- (22) Īrānshahrī,⁷
- (23) Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn Shīrāzī,
- (24) Mīr Dāmād,
- (25) Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and

¹ Zeno of Elea (490 – 430 BCE): a Greek philosopher and student-defender of Parmenides, who is known for his paradoxes of space, time, motion and change. [Trans.]

² Ahmād Amīn Zakī Najīb Maḥmūd, *Qissat al-Falsafah al-Yūnāniyyah*, p. 45.

³ Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (121 – 180 CE): Roman Emperor from 161 to 180 (being the last of the “Five Good Emperors”) and considered one of the most important Stoic philosophers. [Trans.]

⁴ Marcus Aurelius, *Falāsefah-ye Buzurg*, p. 49.

⁵ Abū ’l-Ḥasan Bahmanyār ibn Marzubān ‘Ajāmi āzerbāyjānī, known as Bahmanyār (died 1067): a famous pupil of Avicenna, and of a Persian Zoroastrian background. [Trans.]

⁶ Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī: the great Persian physician and chemist who discovered alcohol and authored a popular book in medicine entitled *Al-Hāwī*. [Trans.]

⁷ Abū ’l-’Abbās īrānshahrī: a 9th-century Persian philosopher, mathematician, natural scientist, historian of religion, astronomer, and author. [Trans.]

(26) Mīr Findiriskī¹: They all believe that the reality of things is unknown and what can be sought is the logical portion of things, or “to the extent of human comprehension” (bi-qadr al-tā‘qat al-bashariyyah). They say philosophy is the knowledge of the truths about creatures to the extent comprehensible to human beings.

27. In the opinion of Dr. Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Salām, the unity of forces invoked proves that this Single Power is yet to be physically defined.

28. Johannes Scotus Eriugena:² “All manifestations of existence of the objects and form are like forms in their primary essence.”³

29. Meister Eckhart:⁴ “The universe we have access to, that is, the world of creatures and material things, is a model and prototype of the Universal Reason.”⁵

30. Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlawī (Rūmī):

کل عالم صورت عقل کل است کاوست ببابی هر آنکه اهل قل است

The whole world is the form of Universal Reason, which is the father of whosoever is a follower of the Word.⁶

عقل پنهان است و ظاهر عاملی صورت ما موج یا از روی نمی

31. Giordano Bruno:⁷ Bruno adds this point to the theory of Democritus about indivisible particles:

¹. Sayyid Mīr Abū ’l-Qāsim Astarābādī, known as Mīr Findiriskī (1562 – 1640): a teacher of Mullā Ṣadrā and a renowned Iranian philosopher, poet and mystic of the Safavid era. [Trans.]

². Johannes Scotus Eriugena (c. 815 – c. 877 CE): an Irish theologian, Neoplatonist philosopher, and poet, known for having translated and made commentaries upon the work of Pseudo-Dionysius (a Christian theologian and philosopher of the late 5th to early 6th century). [Trans.]

³. *Qissat al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*.

⁴. Eckhart von Hochheim O.P., commonly known as Meister Eckhart (c. 1260 – c. 1327): a German theologian, philosopher, and mystic. [Trans.]

⁵. S.S. Frost (?), *Uṣūl-e Ta‘lim-e Falāsefah-ye Buzurg* (*Principles of the Teachings of Great Philosophers*), p. 30. [Trans.]

⁶. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu ’ddīn Rūmī*, Book 4, line 3259, p. 365. [Trans.]

⁷. Giordano Bruno, born Filippo Bruno (1548 – 1600): an Italian Dominican friar, philosopher, mathematician and astronomer. [Trans.]

“Ether is a fluid that fills the air, and the tiny particles of this fluid substance called ‘monads’ are indivisible impenetrable units of substance, and it is the same units of substances that bring about interaction, cause and effect of different materials and forms.”¹

“The entire world of being is living, and there is a Universal Spirit in all realities of the permanent beings, and no part of the universe at all is lifeless. Without doubt, these beings are an integral part of a Source of activity from which the different kinds of creatures originate, just as the rays of the sun originate from the sun.”²

32. [Gottfried Wilhelm] Leibniz: “We know that each of the utilitarian dimensions, mechanisms and metaphysical realities of the creatures is correct in its own right. The mechanism in the outward and apparent dimension as well as the ‘monads’ in the inward dimension are pure.”³

“The explanation of this meaning is that every individual essence (monad) is a universe in itself; that is, that which exists in all essences of the universe is present in every essence and each of the essences is the reflection of the whole visage of the entire universe. It is as if the entire universe is reflected in it except that every essence potentially encompasses a certain degree of the truth and another degree actually.

“The degree in which the truth is actually reflected in it pertains to its perception, and the degree in every individual differs according to the intangible differences. The root of essence is interlinked or attached to one another... and, it can also be said that a perspective through which the universe can be seen, except that the extent of the perspectives differs with one another—some wide, while others narrow.”

33. Herbert (?): “Contradictory meaning, especially in philosophy, pertains to matter, time, place, movement, essence, accident, and cause. But since matter and time are both multiplicable, they are common because they are divisible, and it is the principle of contradictions which exists in the drinking-place of Zeno and Kant. Movement is the fusion of being and non-being. Quiddity (jawhar) means just a single thing which is divisible on account of accidents and powers, while cause—if it is external—means that

¹. *Qissat al-Falsafat al-Hadithah*, p. 43.

². *Ibid.*, p. 44; *Tārikh al-Falsafat al-Hadithah*, pp. 34-36.

³. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

a being is affected by a causality which was in the past, and not [on account of being impressed or changed]. If it has been changed without taking any consideration, it is the same previous state, and if it were an internal cause such as a volitional action, then it signifies the agency, and being the object of action of the single thing.”

In order to remove contradiction, it must be said that what exists externally is not only that which has been tangible for us from the beginning, and multiplying. They are rather qualities contrary to the tangible ones and each of them is simple and absolute in its own right, and all things perceptible by our senses are a compound we have made. Therefore, they are both essential and relative at the same time and have no contradiction in the absoluteness of the qualities because our beings, like Leibniz’s monads, are protracted, with the only difference that our beings consist of different states. In fact, they are simple (*basāyit*) at the peak of simpleness (*basātat*) and lack change; they are permanently stable and the changes that take place are only in the variant attachments of the qualities and not in their essence. It is in this way that Herbert (?) resolves contradiction.¹

34. Fichte:² “Since what the people regard as ‘existence’—whether accidents or essences—have no reality and are [mere] forms, there is no ‘was’ and [only] ‘is’ exists, and that which has reality is the same ‘I’. (Here, we also refrain from using the term ‘self’ or ‘mind’ for it may give us a wrong impression). The acquisition of knowledge is such that initially the ‘I’ comes to its senses, becomes aware of itself or finds itself out. At this point, Fichte uses an expression which we may suggest ‘to make up’ (*wad‘*). In this case, in the words of Fichte it can be said thus, “The ‘I’ makes up itself” or establishes its essence, but I think if we use the Persian equivalent of *wad‘* which is ‘to mold’ (*bar nihādan*), it would be more compatible with Fichte’s expression. Hence, he says, “First, the ‘I’ molds itself.” In essence, the ‘I’ is unlimited but since it molds itself, giving it distinction and confidence, it [actually] limits itself because to be distinguished and determined implies being limited, and the unlimited cannot be distinguished and determined. The very act of the ‘I’ limiting itself [is] ‘other than I’; that is, the tangible

¹. *Tārikh al-Falsafat al-Hadithah*, p. 270.

². Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762 – 1814): a German philosopher and a founding figure of the philosophical movement known as German idealism, a movement that developed from the theoretical and ethical writings of Immanuel Kant. [Trans.]

world or that which is called the world outside the mind will be realized. In other words, the existence of ‘other than I’, that is, the things—big and small—and the entire external world is [possible] through the limit which corresponds to the ‘I’ and strikes at the ‘other than I’. That is to say, it makes divisible that which is indivisible. It thus becomes clear that the ‘other than I’ is a creation of the ‘I’. The ‘I’ is the subject while the ‘other than I’ is an object. The ‘I’ is the knower while the ‘other than I’ is the unknowing object to be known. In this manner, it becomes clear that the knower and the known is one and the same, and the ‘other than I’ is nothing. We know that the ‘I’ is not completely defined in the philosophy of Fichte. It only clarifies the point that the essence of things is something extra natural.”¹

35. Schelling:² The main difference between the philosophy of Fichte and that of Schelling is that Fichte regards the special world and outside the essence as unreal, limiting the truth within the essence, while Schelling believes in the world as real. However, Schelling supposes that the world and the ‘I’ are either outside or within the essence; that is, the souls are of one type and of one origin, and each of them is not absolute truth, or the creator, or created by another. The same power, which exists in the soul or spirit, also exists in nature. Each of them subsists, parallel with the other, in following the same rule, and it is in this way that we can realize the existence of nature and understand how the soul is nourished in the world. In reality, the world of nature undergoes the same process of the soul for its nourishment. Thus, there must be another Power in nature, which is different from the outward power, which is tangible. In other words, according to Fichte, there is something in the soul, which is opposed by a restraining power through which whatever is within and outside the soul, is reconciled. This opposition must exist in nature as a whole, except that these opposing powers are weaker in nature in the sense that the “spiritual substance” is static and inert while the “material soul” which is activated is capacious.”³

36. George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel:⁴ “Existence is of two types: (1)

¹ Muḥammad ‘Ali Furūghī, *Sayr-e Ḥikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 2, pp. 11-12.

² Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, later von Schelling (1775 – 1854): a German philosopher who stands midpoint between his former mentor Fichte and former roommate Hegel in the development of German idealism. [Trans.]

³ *Qissat al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah* and *Tārīkh al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*.

⁴ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831): a German philosopher, one of the creators of German idealism, and along with Immanuel Kant, one of the most

existence for the senses which is particular and personal, and (2) existence for the intellect which is universal or general.” The tangible existent is proved to be devoid of reality and that which is real is the intelligible existent, and these two types of existents must not be separated from the philosophy of Hegel. When he says that a thing or a person who is “particular” has no reality and that reality is intelligible and universal, he does not mean that every “particular” has no external existence and every “universal” has external existence. It rather suggests that external existence means intelligible and useful to the time and space (because once it is not useful to the time and space, it cannot be discerned by the sensory perceptions). Its existence is not original, independent and intrinsic; it is rather accidental, and depends on the existence of the intellect and is a branch of it. The existence which is independent, genuine and intrinsic is intelligible, and this ruling is clarified in the statements of the philosophers who have founded critical philosophy. And we know that the existence of every existent depends on the conception or knowledge about it in our minds. That is, the existence of all existents is secondary, relative and supplementary, with the exception of the intelligibles and conceptions whose existence does not depend on another thing, and if they are relative, this is only in relation to themselves; hence, they are original, independent and intrinsic...” And this is one of the famous statements of Hegel: “That which is real and realized is intelligible and that which is intelligible is realized because it is obvious that that which is real cannot be contrary to the intellect and that which is affirmed by the intellect cannot be unreal.”¹

From the theory of Hegel, what is related to our discourse is that since the concrete existents are secondary, depend on the intellect, and attached to the more comprehensive “I”, it is impossible to know them except through the intellect.

37. Filisteh Dulamneh (?): The reason of the atheist in denying the Real Origin is His [alleged] weakness and impotence and the incompatability of such a ‘god’ with the natural and creative evils. Given this description, however, this materialist has acquired faith in certain matters, which he has never understood; for example, gravitation, locomotion, matter, and mind. What a folly! If a materialist could have defined a grain of sand to me, I

influential philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment. [Trans.]

¹ *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 64.

could have explained God to him.¹

“It is the gradual manifestation of the Real Essence in time and space which leads toward perfection but will never reach perfection because if it is perfect then it will never be created. The stages of perfection begin with the inanimate objects and proceed to the living creatures, and in the lower stages, in which materiality prevails; the world is the world of constraint no matter how one progresses, and the world becomes the world of compulsion.”²

38. Jean-Marie Guyau:³ “This young scholar regards the origin or truth of all existents as living.”⁴

“The gist of Guyau’s view is that the origin or truth in the world is indeed life and life is diverse throughout the world. That is, it is life, which is yet to flourish, or life, which extends.”

However, the truth about life must be seen. According to Guyau, the truth of life is enhancement, expansion, empowerment, and spreading out. But, it is enhancement of the self and not taking something from others and adding it to oneself, or spreading out to despise others; it is rather innovation and self-bestowal. It is in the nature of life to be enhanced as well as to extend. Its enhancement means to make use of and show its power and talent. Its expansion means that its powers, including mental power, skills, feelings, or determination, must go beyond itself and reach others.

[Since Guyau’s moral philosophy is about a highly exalted life, we shall also quote his pertinent statements here:] “Complete life is to make use of it for others. Absolute selfishness is incompatible with life; it is mere desiring for, limiting and reducing oneself. If there were no existence and grace, there would be death, because life will not last long unless it is spread out. This is the pinnacle of selfishness in the zenith of selflessness, and morality cannot be individualistic; in fact, by necessity, it must be collective. If a person does not live in a group, then what is the meaning of life [for him]? If existence is not coupled with enhancement, bestowal and grace, how can it be called “life” and if it is not so, how can grace be expressed? Therefore, sense of

¹. *Ibid.*

². *Ibid.*

³. Jean-Marie Guyau (1854 – 1888): a French philosopher and poet. [Trans.]

⁴. *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 143.

morality, i.e. selflessness, is not based upon right and duty because it is a necessity of life, and this is the truth. It is also for this reason that it earns no reward because to be good is harmonious with nature while to be wicked is repugnant to it. Even in a collectivity, if acting against the sense of morality incurs punishment, it is not for revenge and retaliation. It is rather for the sake of protection and preservation of society. Forgiving and compassion are not traits of the lower class but part of the disposition and nature of the nobles.” Guyau also said, “I hold the hands of my companions with my one hand and my other hand is meant to hold the hands of the weak. In fact, I don’t mind extending both my hands to the weak.”

39. Hermann Lotze:¹ “Lotze objected to the Romantic philosophers for not taking into consideration the phenomenon of nature and criticized the materialist philosophers for taking into account the form and layer of existence, and he himself believes that each of the two aspects of existence must be reflected upon. There is no doubt that the world has spiritual and intelligible reality which everyone must realize, but one can seek the inward aspect in the outward affairs and the soul can be found in the body. With respect to the world of natural affairs, Lotze’s view can be summed up as follows: We can find the things in the world to be multiple but we can see that they interact with each other. As such, we can find out that those things are not independent of each other because an independent person’s influence upon another person has no meaning. Thus, things are not independent and separate from each other and they have an intangible relationship with each other. In other words, what we can see are different states of One Original Existence that encompasses everything and from which everything originates. [Concerning] the belief of naturalists on the essence of existents, which have integral parts, Lotze synthesizes and adapts the belief of Leibniz .He believes in the existent, with integral parts, as a central force having no dimensions, for dimension, like other tangible qualities, is a product of interaction between and among the integral parts. That is to say, the integral parts are not corporeal; they are states in which the original, real and infinite existent takes form.”

40. Herbert Spencer: “Take science into consideration. Perhaps, it convinces you and answers all questions of the intellect. Ask science, ‘What is the

¹. Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817 – 1881): a German philosopher and logician.
[Trans.]

essence of this tangible matter which has filled space?’ Science will reply, ‘If you cut it apart, you will find out its smaller parts.’ Then, you will ask science again, ‘Can these parts be cut apart infinitely or will it reach a point when these parts can no longer be divisible?’ Both aspects of the issue must be shunned and without formulating a solution for itself, the intellect will surprisingly come to a standstill. After this question, ask the intellect again, ‘What is the faculty [of senses]?’ We do not think science can convince you with a correct answer.”¹

41. Alfred Fauvi (?): “Alfred Fauvi was one of the metaphysical philosophers. He regarded the intelligible, [conceivable or ideational] matter as the truth and in this regard, his way of thinking was not new... Apart from recognizing all realities of the world as intelligible and emanating from the Intelligent, Alfred Fauvi treats knowledge and willpower in man’s being as a single faculty in contrast to most philosophers who make a distinction between them and treat them as two faculties.”²

42. Heron von Helmholtz: “In this work, whose title is about the perpetuity of force, he has conducted a general study of the issue of thermodynamics. He has stated: “Since work, heat and electricity cannot be converted into one another, it is clear that they are various specific forms. That which is specific is not susceptible to change and sometimes we observe it as heat; at times, as light. Once it is in the form of mechanical work, we can observe chemical and electrical energy, and this refers to ‘energy’. The entire world of nature stems from large and inalterable amounts of energy which appear to us in various forms, and now they are together in terms of quantity.”³

“We must bear in mind that energy which is defined as “the primary substance of things” is purely theoretical from the perspective of physics. According to Max Planck, Helmholtz believes in supernatural realities while talking about the fundamental reality of the world of nature. Planck thus says, “The measurements of the physicists never teach him anything about the real world. For him, measurements are nothing but messages, which are more or less uncertain. In the words of Helmholtz himself, they are nothing but signs through which he can communicate with the real world. Thereafter,

¹. Herbert Spencer’s “Mabādī-e [Uṣūl-e] Nakhustīn (The Origins of Primary Principles),” as quoted in *Qiṣṣat al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*, pp. 477, 778.

². *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 141.

³. *Tārīkh-e ‘Ulūm (History of Science)*, trans. Hasan Saffārī, p. 612.

he strives to attain a document proving the remnants of an unknown civilization, and tries to achieve results from these endeavors. If a linguist wants to yield result, he must accept the principle that the document under consideration must incorporate the pertinent meaning. In the same vein, the physicists must take this idea as fundamental that the real world follows laws which are beyond our understanding.”¹

43. Herbert Spencer: “So, it must be known that there is something which is unknown, and the more the people of knowledge become knowledgeable of knowable things, the more they become ignorant of that unknown entity, for known things are accidents of the unknown entity...”²

44. Blaise Pascal:³ “When this weak man wants to plunge into or be knowledgeable with the world of nature, he stands in astonishment between two infinities—infinity in greatness and infinity in smallness. If you observe the human being in comparison to the world of nature and boundless outer space, he is so small that there is no relationship between him and nature. It is here where science must find its causes and effects. No matter how the human mind wants to know its components, system and laws [from] the beginning up to the end, it cannot do so except with a set of common pieces of knowledge which are in the human market.”⁴

45. Immanuel Kant: “I am neither a Sophist nor a Puritanist; neither do I negate creatures nor deny God; nor do I regard science and philosophy as meaningless. I have objections against the human intellect, appraising its standard and determining its limit, to make clear to what extent the intellect can reach and cannot reach, and I say that our intellects’ understanding only perceives the outward and accidental aspects of the existents and can only discern the science dealing with natural things. That is, that which can be experimented and if they take fundamentals from us, intellection will have no more bearing for us.”⁵

¹ Max Planck, *Taşwîr-e Jahâñ dar Fîzik-e Jadid* (*The Image of the World in Modern Physics*), trans. Murtadâ Şâbir, p. 138.

² *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urûpâ*, vol. 3, pp. 105-106.

³ Blaise Pascal (1623-1662): a French mathematician, physicist and religious philosopher. [Trans.]

⁴ *Târikh al-Falsafat al-Hadithah*, p. 86.

⁵ *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urûpâ*, vol. 2, p. 247.

46. John Locke:¹ “Can matter think, or not? We have no way of solving this problem because we do not know and understand the truth of the essence of matter except through ideas, which we call ‘essence’. Hence, essence is something unknown and what surround it are some traits which can be perceived by the senses.”²

47. Maine Dubiran (?): “A study of the essence of the soul as has been done by past philosophers is an exercise in futility because the essence cannot be understood.”³

48. Kent (?): “...The second school of truth for things, establishes the transcendence of phenomena but he regards it impossible to identify it. The forerunners of this Kantian school are Kant and Herbert Spencer.”⁴

49. Bernard Bolzano:⁵ “The mathematicians and Aristotelian logicians opposed pragmatism. They believed that among the realities and phenomena, there is an absolute truth which is totally independent and without any relationship with experiments and experimentations. Given its standing, this absolute [entity] cannot be limited by time, space and attributes. So, this is an absolute inalterable truth which, in all objectivity, is permanent and needless of the intellect to perceive its existence. Among those who subscribe to this school is Bernard Bolzano who explains that the truth will essentially remain with the same eternal permanence and independence.”⁶

50. Voltaire:⁷ “Since we cannot have any knowledge except through experiment, it is impossible for us to know what matter is. We can see and feel the properties of this essence but this very word ‘essence’, that is, that which is covered and hidden, tells us that this covered and hidden entity

¹. John Locke (1632-1704): an English physician and philosopher. [Trans.]

². *Tārīkh al-Falsafat al-Hadithah*, p. 221.

³. *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 105.

⁴. *Asas al-Falsafah*, pp. 146-147.

⁵. Bernhard Placidus Johann Nepomuk Bolzano, Bernard Borziano in English (1781 – 1848): a Bohemian mathematician, logician, philosopher, theologian, Catholic priest and antimilitarist of German mother tongue. [Trans.]

⁶. *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁷. François-Marie Arouet, better known by the pen name Voltaire (1694-1778): a French Enlightenment writer and philosopher famous for his wit and advocacy for civil liberties. [Trans.]

shall always be unknown and no matter how much we discover its external dimensions, still this concealed thing will always remain unknown to us.”¹

51. George Santayana: “I am sincere in materialist philosophy but I do not think I have understood the real meaning of matter and it is also necessary for the scholars to make me understand what matter really is. And I say that matter is exactly like mentioning the name of a close friend ‘Sam Jones’ without knowing him fully. In fact, we are only familiar with his outward personality.”²

52. Regarding the interpretation and analysis of things through matter, Joseph Dvmaystr (?) has opposed modern philosophers, saying: “Matter has no causality at all... And we do not know of anybody who can comprehend all realities and every level of existents as confined to or limited by a superior existent. Perhaps, there might be levels of superior existents which are beyond our comprehension.”³

53. Antoine Kernu (?): “It is natural for us to know the things in terms of [their] connection with us and not their absolute reality.”⁴

54. Oliver Ladzh (?): “But we do not really know all laws governing this substance. In fact, we tread a path, which leads us to this knowledge. In this regard, the natural scientists hold diverse beliefs and assumptions which exceed hundreds, and since it is an ambiguous and unfathomable subject, it is beyond human comprehension.”⁵

55. Nicolas Malebranche:⁶ “Man has no knowledge of the physical bodies but he can understand their mental images which exist in the beginning.”⁷

56. Schopenhauer:⁸ “How can the materialists define the intellect by matter

¹. Andre Carlson (?), “Voltaire” in *Falāsefah-ye Buzurg* (*The Great Philosophers*).

². *Qissat al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*, p. 510.

³. *Tārīkh al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*, p. 294.

⁴. *Ibid.*, pp. 256-257.

⁵. Ṣubḥī, “Aqā’id-e Oliver Ladzh (?)” in *Falsafeh-ye Takwīn*.

⁶. Nicolas Malebranche (1638 – 1715): a French Oratorian and rationalist philosopher. [Trans.]

⁷. *Tārīkh al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*, p. 126.

⁸. Arthur Schopenhauer (1788 – 1860): a German philosopher known for his pessimism and philosophical clarity. [Trans.]

while we understand matter itself through the intellect?! ...It is impossible for us to understand the truth as long as we commence the discussion and study with matter, while this tangible thing is a direct creation of ours.”¹

57. Jean Filo (?): “In order to define time, we must have complete and ultimate knowledge of physics. Fortunately, this branch of science always deals with measurements and not with definite concepts. Physical science limits itself to determining a series of transcendental approximations, provided that these approximations are close to one another.”²

58. Baruch Spinoza:³ “We know the essence of truth but through its attributes which, in turn, means what the intellect can comprehend and materialize is a quiddity. An infinite essence has infinite attributes and every attribute signifies constancy of an eternal quiddity, and we have no knowledge except that of the attributes; except thinking and spatiuum.”⁴

59. William Hamilton:⁵ “He is a follower of Kant and regards the human intellect as incapable of perceiving the absolute and only capable of perceiving relative things. And the power of the human intellect cannot discern anything except by limiting, restricting and laying a condition to it. In reality, human perception of a thing has no meaning except limiting and restricting it. Similarly, philosophy is nothing except limiting a thing... and we cannot have knowledge of anything except comparing it to ourselves or something else which is known to us...”⁶

60. Thomas Carlyle:⁷ “But science portrays nature without knowing its meaning.”⁸ “Yet, he also had a philosophical view in this regard, and was

¹. *Qissat al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*, p. 402.

². Jean T., *Fālū Hāfiżeh-Zamān*.

³. Baruch de Spinoza, later Benedict de Spinoza (1632 – 1677): a Dutch rationalist philosopher. [Trans.]

⁴. *Tārīkh al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*, p. 107; ‘Abd al-Rahmān Badawī, *Rabī‘ al-Fikr al-Yūnānī*, p. 125; *Qissat al-Falsafat al-Hadīthah*, p. 15; “Spinoza,” *Falsafeh-ye Buzurg (The Great Philosophers)*.

⁵. Sir William Hamilton, 9th Baronet (1788 – 1856): a Scottish metaphysician. [Trans.]

⁶. *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 79.

⁷. Thomas Carlyle (1795 – 1881): a Scottish satirical writer, essayist, historian and teacher during the Victorian era. [Trans.]

⁸. *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 79.

inclined towards German philosophers. He believed in a form and meaning for every thing just as the image of the human being is that of a four-footed animal that covers its body, but its meaning is spirit and divine entity..."

61. Gustav Theodor Fechner:¹ "Fechner explicitly and completely believes in spiritual unity and all existents as having a soul. He regards a particular as an integral part of a single soul..."²

62. Paul Langevin:³ "From the very beginning, he had realized the extraordinary importance of Einstein's discovery and always corroborated with him in developing the results. For example, he was able to completely clarify the issue of the unity of matter..."⁴

63. Tommaso Campanella:⁵ "In every existent, there is a power from eternity through which it can make its essence move."⁶

64. Heidegger.⁷ "This world has come to an end and is restricted, and it is possible to be destroyed suddenly by a destructive system. According to Heidegger, the universal system's power is value-based and is directly metaphysical in nature."⁸

65. Henri Poincaré.⁹ "The axioms of our science are neither sensory nor real proofs. They are rather conventional matters and selected in such a way that they are interpreted as sensory proofs, and since the laws of science are

¹. Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801 – 1887): a German experimental psychologist who was an early pioneer in experimental psychology and the founder of psychophysics. [Trans.]

². *Tarikh al-Falsafat al-Hadithah*, p. 375; *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 122.

³. Paul Langevin (1872 – 1946): a prominent French physicist who developed *Langevin dynamics* and the *Langevin equation*. [Trans.]

⁴. *Tarikh-e 'Ulūm (The History of Science)*, p. 781.

⁵. Tommaso Campanella, baptized Giovanni Domenico Campanella (1568 – 1639): an Italian philosopher, theologian, astrologer, and poet. [Trans.]

⁶. *Tarikh al-Falsafat al-Hadithah*, p. 38.

⁷. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976): an influential German philosopher Martin Heidegger known for his existential and phenomenological explorations of the "question of Being." [Trans.]

⁸. Frost (?), *Uṣūl Ta 'ālīm Falāsifeh-ye Buzurg*, p. 171.

⁹. Jules Henri Poincaré (1854 – 1912): a French mathematician, theoretical physicist, engineer, and a philosopher of science. [Trans.]

conventional, they do not teach us anything of the reality or truth, for they only make known the human way of action or behavior.”¹

66. Hippolyte Taine:² “One of his distinctive features is that in spite of his inclination to positivism, he did not totally discard basic philosophy, believing that one can go beyond the outward and accidental and reach the essences and truths. He was not as hopeless as other positivist philosophers are in this regard. He said, “I consider my horizon limited and I can only discern my mind and I cannot determine the mind of a fellow human being.”³

67. Friedrich Schiller:⁴ “In view of the difference of our stances, our views on things are diverse. Of those things, we do not perceive everything that must be perceived. In fact, among their elements and roots, we select what are given attention (or what attract our attention), and the relationship we set among things is meant for the goals and outcomes we contemplate in seeking for them. We formulate our verifications of sets of things, calling them logic, geometry, computation, and the like. So, all these sciences are replete with human orientation [and are determined by us]...”⁵

68. Davies:⁶ “The philosophy of Davies is neo-Hegelian, for while not accepting the absolute one, he nevertheless affirms particulars in contrast. Attempting to reconcile them he says, ‘On one hand, thinking necessitates the absolute because the basic function of thinking is to give judgment and judgment has no value except when a high-level subject is materialized in our thinking, such that it is devoid of any sort of question and doubt which every judgment may necessitate. Thus, it is not real except when there is a single “I” that guarantees all ideas...’⁷

¹. *Irtibāt-e Insān-Jahān* (*The Relationship between Man and Universe*), vol. 3, p. 13.

². Hippolyte Adolphe Taine (1828 – 1893): a French critic and historian. [Trans.]

³. *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 134.

⁴. Ferdinand Canning Scott Schiller (1864 - 1937): a German-British philosopher. [Trans.]

⁵. *Tārikh al-Falsafat al-Hadithah*, p. 409.

⁶. Most probably, it refers to John Eric Langdon-Davies (1897–1971), a British journalist and author of books on military, scientific, historical, and Spanish (including Catalan) subjects. [Trans.]

⁷. *Ibid.*, pp. 402-403.

69. Whitehead: ““The notion of mass is losing its unique preeminence as being the one final permanent quantity... Mass now becomes the name for a quantity of energy considered in relation to some of its dynamical effects.’ To such a low state have the mighty fallen.”¹

70. Nietzsche: “Boscovich² and Copernicus³ have hitherto been the greatest and most successful opponents of ocular evidence.”⁴

71. John Dewey: “There is no wonder Dewey concludes that ‘the notion of matter actually found in the practice of science has nothing in common with the matter of materialists.’ Could anything be more mystical and anomalous than this announcement, by physicists, that ‘matter,’ in the sense of spatial substance, has ceased to exist? The electrons, we are told, have none of the properties of matter: they are not solid, nor liquid, nor gaseous.”

72. Lord Bertrand Russell: “He imagines that the universe is created from a substantial matter, and by ‘substantial matter’ he means particles of the fusion of matter and intellect in which the properties of matter and intellect cannot be found.”⁵ The definition of matter, according to Russell, is like the definition given by an Irish fisherman to his fishnet; that is, some holes which are put together by threads!

73. Langdon-Davies says, “He should have only added this to the definition: ‘and its threads are also cut into pieces and only their knots have remained!’”⁶

74. Emile Boutroux:⁷ “All natural laws are anchored in the rule and necessity

¹. Will Durant, *The Pleasures of Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p. 40. [Trans.]

². Roger Joseph Boscovich (1711 – 1787): a theologian, physicist, astronomer, mathematician, philosopher, diplomat, poet, Jesuit, and a polymath from Croatia, who studied and lived in Italy and France, and famous for his atomic theory. [Trans.]

³. Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543): the first astronomer to formulate a comprehensive heliocentric cosmology, which rejected the geocentric Ptolemaic system. [Trans.]

⁴. *Ibid.*

⁵. C.E.M. Joad, *Muqaddameh bar Falsafeh-ye Jadid (Introduction to Modern Philosophy)*, p. 42.

⁶. Langdon-Davies, *Shigift-hā-ye Duriñ-e Atom (Marvels inside the Atom)*, p. 75.

⁷. Étienne Émile Marie Boutroux (1845 – 1921): an eminent 19th century French philosopher of science and religion, and an historian of philosophy. [Trans.]

of the cause and effect relationship. In reality, all forms of its expression constitute a rule, but on one hand, it must be noted that this rule and those laws are expressed orally according to the dictates of our intellects. We undertake matters according to our will, i.e. our desires and needs, and it is not certain if these are consistent with the truth. In other words, since we look at the affairs of the world, we have no option but to strive to make them consistent with our intellects and souls. How can our intellects be compatible with the Universal Intellect, making correct judgments, and our desire and wish become identical with the truth? Of course, the human being has no option but to give judgment on [different] affairs according to the dictates of his reason and look at them by taking account of his demands, i.e., his needs. Yet, it is certain that our intellects are incapable of comprehending the truth, and our desires which are part of our totality are not supposed to undermine the truth..."¹

75. Henri Bergson:² "The pieces of knowledge acquired through intellection and appear in the form of sciences and crafts are truths but they are relative and supplementary; they are not absolute truths and essential knowledge, and it is meant for something we have stated (life and its organization through certain means, instruments, methods, and the like)... So, according to Bergson, philosophy (in its technical sense) deals with knowledge about the essence of things and perceiving the truths, but this is not through intellection as we have explained, for intellection is actually conception and affirmation which are not real perception. Real perception is such that the perceiver and the perceived must be one (the union of the intelligent and the intelligible) and this state cannot be attained by means of conception and affirmation, but rather through the intellect, and another faculty which Bergson calls literally, "inward view" [which perhaps means "inward intuition"] or "self-view". Bergson regards perception of the truth as its outcome, calling it 'philosophy', and thinking that the way of attaining it is not through reasoning, argumentation and presenting of proof but rather the "inward view".³

¹ *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, p. 157.

² Henri-Louis Bergson (1859-1941): a major French philosopher and evolutionist. [Trans.]

³ *Sayr-e Hikmat dar Urūpā*, vol. 3, pp. 171-172; Prof. Dr. Sergei Vayulov (?) (President of the Academy of Science), *Fizik-e Nūr* (*The Light of Physics*), quoting from the lecture of Umov in a jubilee celebration of the University of Moscow, p.

76. In a lecture at the Moscow State University, Umov,¹ a Russian physicist and philosopher, has said: "Life inside the atom exposes to us some properties. Perhaps, it might be different in spite of losing physical substances and while exhausting others. Yet, this truth is again kept away from us, which is beyond guessing. It is true but we have found out that the physical function is only in the description of the outward forms and searching for the existing relations among them; that is, it is not mere searching for the laws. Through its conceptual and systematic method, physics gets us closer to the single reality. This reality is very far from the limits of perceivable things. Once again, however, we recognized greatness of the truth, which is impossible to attain. This evolutionary perception is more scientific thinking; that is, laying down the foundation of thinking whose sequence is incessant and whose existence is perpetual."

77. Oswald Kulpe:² "That the theories conforming to the atomic world, which only pertain to the phenomena, do not go beyond the limits of experiment and what is beyond it, we must also consider are not in need of any reasoning because the shortcoming of our knowledge about the external world is something undeniable. Thus, the critics, realists and skeptics, in turn, do not deny this point."³

78. Albert Einstein: "It is so astounding that the science of physics has revealed so little and limited the external world for us. Our knowledge has limited our faculties of perception not only through conventional expedient factors (particular orientation) but rather by virtue of 'choosing'.⁴"

"The goal of science has never been to prove the inalterable truths and establish the definite and eternal beliefs. Science endeavors to gradually get

23. In the same page of the book, it is said that the Leader of the 1917 Revolution was present in the lecture, discerning well the value of it.

¹. Nikolay Alekseevich Umov (1846 – 1915): a Russian physicist and mathematician known for discovering the concept of Umov-Poynting vector and Umov effect. [Trans.]

². Oswald Kulpe (1862 – 1915): one of the structural psychologists of the late 19th and early 20th century. [Trans.]

³. Oswald Kulpe, *Muqaddameh bar Falsafeh* (*An Introduction to Philosophy*), p. 32.

⁴. Bertrand Russell, *Mafhūm-e Nisbiyyat-e Einstein wa Natāyij-e Falsafi-ye ān* (*The Meaning of Einstein's Relativity and Its Philosophical Repercussion*), trans. Murtadā Ṭulū'i, p. 194.

closer to the truth, and, little by little, open the closed doors of the secrets of nature for mankind; to tear apart the curtains of ambiguity, one after another; to get closer to the summit of knowledge of the ‘possible’, without claiming attainment of ‘the perfect and ultimate wellbeing’ in any stages of one’s perfection.”¹

“The simplest thing which we can see is covered by mystery. This is the cradle of all real sciences and arts of man. Anyone who does not know this and is not amazed and astonished by this great mystery is dead. He is an unlit candle. Witnessing this mystery is great and to have knowledge of it is love, although it is mixed with fear (sense of prevailing immensity), which all religions brought about. Knowledge about the existence of things, which we cannot fathom, is the manifestations and reflections of the real form of things and the first cause of the radiation of their essence, and it can only be reasonable and probable through the simplest form and the most primary perspective. This profound feeling or this great excitement brings about religion and religious feeling. It is in this sense... and only in this sense that I am a religious and devoted person.”²

“But there is a belief and third religion without any exception although none of them can be found to have an identical and pure form.” I consider it the religious feeling of creation or ‘existence’. It is very problematic for me to explain this feeling to a person who is totally bereft of it. It is especially so, given the fact that there is no more discussion here of God who is portrayed in different forms. In this religion, one senses the insignificance of human hope and goals as well as magnificence and glory, which manifest beyond matters and phenomena in nature and ideas. He imagines his own being as a kind of prison just as he wants to be free from the cage of his body and find out the entire being all at once as a single truth.”³

And on page 57, it is thus stated: “In my opinion, it is the most important function of art and science to stimulate this feeling and keep it alive in those who deserve.”⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

² Albert Einstein, *Dunyā-ye Keh Man Mībinam* (*The World that I See*), trans. Farīdūn Sālikī, p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

79. Max Planck: “The utmost aspiration of the physicist is to know the external real world, all of whose components are tools for his exploration. That is, his measurements never teach anything about the very real world. For him, measurements are nothing but messages which are more or less uncertain. Or, in the words of Helmholtz, they are nothing but signs which communicate the real world to him. Thereafter, in the same way that the linguist strives to read a document from the remnants of an unknown civilization, he endeavors to get some conclusions from them. If the linguist wants to arrive at a certain conclusion, he must accept as a principle that the document under examination is meaningful. In the same manner, the physicists must regard the idea that the real world follows certain laws, which are beyond our comprehension as foundation. It is even necessary for him to abandon the hope of finding out those laws in totality or even determining the nature of those laws by means of determining the subject from the very beginning. By believing in the existence of such laws, the physicist builds and focuses his attention on a system of concepts and propositions for himself. That is, he pursues a better image to the extent possible from the physical world in such a way that it is as if this image is the real world as much as possible and sends those messages to the physicist.”¹

Max Planck has also touched on this subject in his other book whose specifics are indicated below.²

In order to simplify this subject, let us consider the following statements about “freewill”: “...In a nutshell, it must be stated that if willpower is considered from without, it is positive but if it considered from within, it is free. By paying attention to this point, the problem can be solved—a problem which is only caused by the amalgamation of two irreconcilable viewpoints. Therefore, we are engrossed with a false problem (freewill). Today, perhaps, saying it is still objectionable, but I have no doubt that as time goes on, all will have no option but to acknowledge it.”³

This is an explicit expression, for, in view of its natural existence, the notion

¹. Max Planck, *Taşwîr-e Jahân dan Fizik-e Jadid* (*The Image of the World in Modern Physics*), trans. Murtadâ Şâbir, p. 138.

². Max Planck, ‘Ilm beh Kujā Mirawad?’ (*Where is Science Going?*), trans. Ahmâd ārâm, p. 118.

³. *Taşwîr-e Jahân dan Fizik-e Jadid*, p. 194.

of willpower in the natural levels of the mind, which are adjacent to the natural dimension of our existence, submits to the law of causation. However, given the profound level of our mind (the conceiver of activities of our inward phenomena) willpower has freedom. Hence, any thing, which comes into being in the arena of nature and man, desires the truth or more profound truths. In the book entitled *Jabr wa Ikhtiyār* (Predetermination and Freewill) (1975), I have put forth the said theory in the following manner without having information whatsoever about Max Planck's statements:

"Is willpower free? Most people say, 'I was free in my willpower to do such and such thing.' They also say sometimes, 'I was free in my willpower not to do such and such thing.' Nevertheless, at times they also say, 'In my willpower I was compelled to do or not to do such and such a thing.' Such myopic perception can also be seen in some great ideas. For example, in voluntary actions, willpower is presented as free, and in emergency and compulsory actions, willpower is assumed to be deterministic. But it seems that this classification, is inaccurate because from the totality of considerations that can be done about willpower, we arrive at the conclusion that willpower, which means to desire or to wish, cannot be described with 'freedom'.¹ In simpler terms, we have no 'free' willpower because willpower is an inner activity which is a product of the activity of one of the instincts. If it remains in its natural state it is a reflection and a sort of reaction, and if it is under the supervision and control of the wholesome² "I," it is an effect which is produced at the natural level of the soul in compulsory form under the supervision and control of the "I".³ In other terms, though originating from the instinct's activity, since 'I' has the supervision and control, willpower has no option but to appear to be free. This veneer of freedom does not stem from willpower itself but rather from the "I" which has the supervision and control. If we examine closely the point that willpower is gradually produced in the state of "supervision and control of the 'I'" and

¹. In the book *Jabr wa Ikhtiyār*, what has actually been used is 'presentation' instead of 'description' but the term 'description' is more accurate for our present purpose.

². The word 'wholesome' is not in the book but it seems appropriate to put it; hence, we insert it here.

³. The exact text in the book *Jabr wa Ikhtiyār* is "...which is produced by forced out of the supervision and control of the 'I' but the correct line is this: "...it is an effect which is produced in the natural level of the soul in compulsory form of the supervision and control of the 'I'."

runs its course, we can correctly discern that willpower by itself has no freedom.”¹

As such, among the most important examples of tracing appearances and their working to the concealed truth in this very world are our inner appearances and activities, which come into being with the management of the “I”. In these cases of the “I,” the said things are organized and administered from the outward levels of the human inner being.

80. Bertrand Russell: “For instance, we are similar to an inborn blind person who has been brought up by some great musicians, and through the relations existing among the musical notes and how to play them, he has learned the pertinent rules and he can read the musical notes and guide an orchestra. Now, if this inborn blind person can understand the explanations of others by means of signs and hints, little by little, he will become aware that musical notes, the movements of fingertips and other movements are representations of certain things completely different from the outward dimensions shown to him, but it is impossible for him to perceive their vocal representations. Now, our knowledge about nature is also something similar to it. We can read the ‘notes’ of nature and identify their written representations, but our inference of what things are represented by these notes is not more than the inference of a person on musical notes which represent certain things other than their apparent forms. The inborn blind person is superior to us in the sense that we are even deprived of living among people who hear the music of nature, and in reality, all of us are blind with respect to perceiving the notes of nature. There is no teacher beside us to hear the real tune of nature’s notes and at least to guide us by hints and signs so as to perceive their essential qualities.”²

If Russell and thinkers like him—from the East and West—would have classified music into three: (1) physical sound with melody, and (2) spiritual sound with intuitive potential, the extremely instructive lessons of teachers would have been comprehensible and perceivable to us:

جمله اجزا در تحرک، در سکون
ناطقان کانا الیه راجعون

¹. Muḥammad Taqī Ja'farī, *Jabr wa Ikhtiyār*, pp. 82-83.

². Bertrand Russell, *Mafhūm-e Nisbiyyat-e Einstein wa Natāyij-e Falsafi-ye ān* (*The Meaning of Einstein’s Relativity and Its Philosophical Repercussion*), trans. Murtadā Ṭulū‘ī, p. 231.

غلغله افکنده در این آسمان

ذکر و تسبیحات اجزای نهان

All particles, in movement at rest, are speakers:

“Truly, to Him we are returning.”

The praises and glorifications of the hidden particles have filled Heaven with an uproar.¹

جمله اجزای زمین و آسمان با تو می‌گویند روزان و شبان

All particles on the earth and the heaven say to you during the day and night:

ما سمعیم و بصیریم و هشیم با شما نامحرمان ما خامشیم

(*They all say*), “*We have hearing and sight and are happy, (although) with you, the uninitiated, we are mute.*”²

خامشیم و نعره تکرارمان می‌رود تا پای تخت یارمان

(3) sound behind the curtain of nature: It is impossible that the voices of the Prophets, Divine leaders and their successors would have been so sincere without hearing the behind-the-curtain voice of nature and thus influence the advancement of righteous civilizations, mold upright human beings and realize lofty human values.

Bertrand Russell says:

“A truer image of the world, I think, is obtained by picturing things as entering into the stream of time from an eternal world outside, than from a view which regards time as the devouring tyrant of all that is. But in thought and in feeling, even though time be real, to realize the unimportance of time is the gate of wisdom.”³

81. Bernard d'Espagnat:⁴ “‘Veiled realities’ (Daspania's theory) holds that there is a non-physical reality independent from us which is beyond the framework of time and space and cannot be described with our current concepts. This independent reality has a cover on its face and one cannot

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu 'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 3, lines 464-465, p. 53. [Trans.]

². *Ibid.*, Book 3, line 1019, p. 113. [Trans.]

³. Bertrand Russell, *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 27.

⁴. Bernard d'Espagnat (b. 1921): a French theoretical physicist, philosopher of science, and best known author for his work on the nature of reality. [Trans.]

describe it as it really is. This does not mean, however, that we cannot have access to it at all. The empirical reality of the physical world and the senses are two complementary reflections of this reality, and cannot be reduced into the physical concepts:

“We have come to the conclusion that it (reality) cannot be known in full... Yet, can it be said that it cannot be known at all? Instead, I say that this reality has a cover on its face.”¹

D'Espagnat regards the explanation for phenomena as the last frontier of physics but at the same time, he believes that studying them shows us something of reality:

“Firstly, I consider the viewpoint of realism to be correct and even inevitable and meaningfully current. At the same time, I know—this time from contemporary physics..., which does not confine the reality into that which can be described, that is, phenomena... By putting them together, it seems that I know that there is something beyond the phenomena. This, in my opinion, is real knowledge and it is very important.

“Secondly, I believe that the primary laws of physics, in spite of being unable to describe the reality as it really is, can acquire something from the reality with the existence of this human perspective, thus encompassing something indescribable from its structure. For me, this reasoning is very important to reasonably oppose the irreducibility of science, for I argue that if physics cannot acquire a perfect and certain description of the reality and yet encompass it, then why other ways such as music, painting and poetry cannot [have such a role]?”²

D'Espagnat emphasizes that we must not confuse the empirical reality with the independent reality, stressing that other fields of knowledge can also show certain forms of the independent reality:

“That which I call ‘empirical reality’ is the same set of phenomena... In my view, it is with this empirical reality that the ideas like ‘complimentary’ can be applied and it is the subject of rational knowledge known as ‘science’. But this must not be confused with the independent reality; something whose complete description probably goes beyond the power of human intellect...

¹ Dr. Mahdī Gulshanī, *Taḥlīlī az Dīdgāh-hī-ye Falsafī-ye Fizikdānān-e Mu‘āṣir* (*An Analysis of the Philosophical Viewpoints of Contemporary Physicists*), pp. 203-204.

² *Ibid.*

Now, it seems rational [for us to accept] that other ways apart from science... can also provide along science something indescribable from the structure of independent reality.”¹

“The ultimate wisdom that physics can teach us is that our perspective must at the same time focus on two levels which represent two meanings that philosophers call ‘reality’. On one hand, we must think about independent reality... We must appreciate the source of phenomena, beauties and values and wish to be united with It. Meanwhile, we must know that this reality is like the unreachable horizon. On the other hand, we must not also be negligent in giving attention to the level of empirical reality... The level of empirical reality is related to the things in life, perfection and even the world. We must give it its real importance... Without treating it identical with the ultimate horizon, it is something which shows the perfect subtlety of this wisdom.”²

In the opinion of D'Espagnat, the difference between the veiled reality and the Kantian noumenon³ is that we can acquire information about this veiled reality with the help of empirical means, for our theories are models, which acquire the approximation of the veiled reality without being able to describe it.⁴ There is a covering between the known and the unknown parts of reality, and the function of science is to expand the first realm and limit the second realm.

In the Words of Einstein

“All are in unison that science must establish the relationship between and among the empirical truths, so that, based on the experimented truths, we can envisage other truths. According to the viewpoint of many positivists, obtaining the perfect answer to this investigation is the sole objective of science. However, I do not believe that such a particular objective causes the enthusiasm of the researcher that leads to great successes. There is a stronger, yet most ambiguous, motive after the untiring efforts that led to

¹. *Ibid.*

². *Ibid.*, p. 205.

³. Noumenon: a posited object or event that is known (if at all) without the use of the senses in contrast with, or in relation to “phenomenon,” which refers to anything that appears to, or is an object of, the senses. [Trans.]

⁴. *Tahlili az Didgāh-hā-ye Falsafī-ye Fizikdānān-e Mu'āṣir (An Analysis of the Philosophical Viewpoints of Contemporary Physicists)*, p. 205.

these successes. We want to discern the existence of reality. The foundation of all these efforts is the conviction, whose structural existence is perfectly coherent. Compared to the past, today we have lesser ground to allow ourselves to deviate from this astounding conviction.”¹

Why we do not want to accept that probably new ways of describing reality is necessary, and that we have not yet succeeded in discovering them does not mean that it is the end of the road.

82. Erwin Schrödinger:² “Modern science is as far as the science of ancient Greeks in discovering the laws of nature.”³

83. Werner Heisenberg – Mathematical forms: “Of course, in the field of atomic physics, many of the common old fields of physics will cease to exist; not only the applicability of their concepts and laws but even the whole concept of the reality... What the term ‘reality’ means is that there exist concrete phenomena regardless of whether they can be observed or not. One can no longer actualize these observations in atomic physics in this simple way. Here, we arrive at the conclusion that natural science does not deal with nature per se; it rather deals with nature the way man describes and understands it... This peculiarity of the quantum theory makes it a problem for us to accept the system acceptable to the philosophy of materialism and to regard the smallest particles of matter, i.e. the basic particles, as existing in the true sense of the word. This is because if the quantum theory is correct, these basic particles are not real as in the case of usual things such as tree and stone. In fact, it seems that it is the abstractions of the observations, which have reality. If it is impossible to attribute existence in its true sense to the basic particles, it is also problematic for us to treat matter as having existence in its real meaning. It is for this reason that on different occasions during the past years, doubts about the current expression of the quantum theory have been voiced by dialectical materialists. But, it (dialectical materialism) has not been able to present an essentially new expression from the perspective of the quantum theory... There is no dispute in that modern basic particles are nearer to the Platonic systematic bodies than Democritus’

¹. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

². Erwin Rudolf Josef Alexander Schrödinger (1887 – 1961): a physicist and theoretical biologist who was one of the fathers of quantum mechanics. [Trans.]

³. *Tahlili az Didgāh-hā-ye Falsafī-ye Fizikdānān-e Mu'āṣir* (*An Analysis of the Philosophical Viewpoints of Contemporary Physicists*), p. 245.

atoms. Modern basic particles are determined by means of the requirements of mathematical symmetry such that they become similar to the systematic bodies in the philosophy of Plato. They are permanent and inalterable, and therefore, they can hardly be considered real in the usual sense of the word; rather, they must be regarded as simple structural display of basic mathematics, which we can reach. In modern natural science there is no such thing but [only] form; it is mathematical symmetry. The origins are also things. And, since mathematical structure in the end is nothing but a rational substance, it can thus be said, in the words of Goethe:¹

“In the beginning I was thinking... It is interesting for me that at the present time, in all parts of the globe, and with all the technological means at our disposal, man strives and solves problems which the Greek philosophers presented 2,500 years ago, and we will know the answers within a few years’ time in the future or at least within the next two decades.”²

84. Janes (?) – Matter as a mere subjective concept: “The world cannot allow physical display and the reason behind, in my opinion, is that it has become a mere subjective concept.”³

85. Niels Bohr: ““In the great stage play of existence, we are both performers and spectators” as quoted from Laozi. “Bohr believes that the function of science is not only to know the nature of things and to provide a description of the external world; rather, its [other] function is to establish the relationship between and among various human experiences. Therefore, whenever we talk about the description of nature, we do not mean a description of nature independent from human beings. In fact, we mean human experiences... it is wrong for us to think that the function of physics is to discover the essence of nature. Physics has something to do with what we can say about nature.”⁴

86. Arthur Fine:⁵ “Realism is dead...”¹ Faine claims that he himself is neither

¹. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832): German poet, novelist, and playwright. [Trans.]

². *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198.

³. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁴. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

⁵. Arthur Fine (born 1937): an American philosopher of science teaching at the University of Washington (UW). [Trans.]

realist nor anti-realist but rather treading a third path which refrains from talking about the external world or giving an analysis of the notion of the truth. Here, his contention is that talking about them must be discarded because of their lack of meaning, or irrelevance. In fact, he says that we discard them because there is no reference to solve these disputes. This outlook of Fine can be regarded as caused by his philosophical despair.”²

We can say that in view of the three reasons and proving the reality of things while setting aside the perception of the perceiver, Fine’s claim that “Realism is dead” is a negative philosophical premise because the need to establish that realism is alive, one cannot set aside realistic discussions and studies.

We must not forget the fact that in knowing the truths of the universe, sometimes the straightest lines are the longest, most complex and most curvy. It is good for Fine to know that if the need for many investigations in knowing the realities of the universe hindered thinking about them, then mankind would not have achieved the advancement we can see.

87. Weisskopf:³ “It is true that an unambiguous description of atomic reality with usual concepts of the physical process is impossible, but we have an unambiguous mathematical design that provides correct prediction and probability for observation.”⁴

88. Weizsäcker: “With the theory of historical evolution of atomic physics, the sciences of chemistry and physics have been fused into a single unit. Since atom is the common bedrock of both sciences, other sciences such as astronomy, aerology, geology, and mineralogy deal with even the description and classification of phenomena for the explanation and establishment of legitimacy. Nowadays, this constitutes the area of application of each of the fundamental sciences of chemistry and physics. Moreover, physics and chemistry have become essential supporting means in

¹. *Tahlili az Dīdgāh-hā-ye Falsafī-ye Fizikdānān-e Mu’āṣir* (*An Analysis of the Philosophical Viewpoints of Contemporary Physicists*), p. 198.

². *Ibid.*, pp. 198-199.

³. Victor Frederick Weisskopf (1908 – 2002): an Austrian born Jewish American theoretical physicist. [Trans.]

⁴. *Zum Weltbild der Physik*, Leipzig 1946.

Its English translation is *The World View of Physics*, London, 1952. [Trans.]

organic science.

“The concept of atom can be considered a tied spot in the scientific fabric of truth. The experiences of the various branches of science revolve around this tied spot, thereby connecting them together.

Chemistry alone, knowledge of heat alone, or the mere theory about protons only makes the existence of atoms probable. That which joins together the threads of different arguments of these principles in claiming the existence of atoms, or what these threads have produced particularly in this case is what I have called ‘scientific fabric’. The possibility of correctness of the final results with such coordination of the compacted and sown lines is as irreducible as it grows and reaches more tied spots.”¹

¹. *Ibid.*

Chapter 5 ***Views on Essential Reality***

Views of Eastern and Western Scholars on the Essential Reality of Existents

At the outset, it must be borne in mind that, in view of the three fundamental principles and religious way of thinking, the collective view of hundreds of thinkers on the reality of “the thing in itself”, can be identified. Those three principles are as follows:

First Principle – Human knowledge (both scientific and philosophical) is the product of the reality of the thing in itself and the qualitative effect of the faculties of one’s perception of the said reality, except in two cases: (1) self-consciousness (intuitive knowledge) and (2) understanding the concept of God. This is because our knowledge in these two cases is not in need of the agency of various elements of preconceived feelings and principles, particular stance and specific orientation. Thus, all questions of science and philosophy are a product of the relationship of “I with its elements of perception” or “other than I”.

Second Principle: There is a direct and indirect relationship of the phenomena and components of the world with one another. The existence of something unknown in the world of nature is sufficient to prove that no rational person can ever claim to understand all things by means of pure science! Our knowledge, in contrast to what we do not know is such that the likes of Newton have said, “We are like small children standing by a vast ocean and can see only a small amount of sand on the shore!”

Third Principle: We cannot grasp the real nature of things and our knowledge cannot go beyond knowing the logical nature of things. Şadr al-Muta’allihīn Shīrāzī defines philosophy as “the knowledge of the truths of existents as far as human comprehension can reach.” It is the same principle we have just mentioned because the truth from which the intrinsic order of real nature stems, is unknowable.

Keeping these three principles in view, the claim that one can know the realities of the world of nature ‘as they are’ through science and philosophy is not convincingly proved. The positivists do not consider the reality of things except as it is knowable. Bohemia says, “There are two fundamental points that quantum theory does not deal with: (1) the existence of things:

quantum theory states that nothing can be examined except the possibility of a thing which can be observed if instruments are utilized; (2) anything which practically takes place.” Concerning fundamental questions, the positivists are of the opinion that existence necessitates the use of concepts, which are actually undefinable and thus must be avoided.¹

In this discourse we shall present the views of many of the most famous philosophers and scientists—both in the past and the present, the East and West—and find out who, among them, regard the essential reality of nature as unfathomable disregarding the abovementioned three principles.

The Main Views of Philosophers and Scholars on the Essential Reality of Things

1. *Rational truths are beyond perceptible things.* Some philosophers have also used the term ‘Universal Intellect’ for it. Among those who expressed this view are the following:

(1) Plato, (2) Samkhya, (3) Hindu concept of the unity of beings, (4) Heraclides, (5) Zeno, (6) Parmenides, (7) Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, (8) Meister Eckhart, (9) Hegel, (10) Alfred Fauvi (?), (11) Nicolas Malebranche, (12) Davies, and (13) Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlawī Rumi.

It is impossible to prove the rational truth beyond the perceptible things through reason and to state its nature through sensory perceptions and scientific experiments. The perceptible things are in a state of constant change and our perceptions about them are relative. Therefore, proving rational truth as the foundation of those perceptible things cannot be correct. In order to prove this point, some Qur’ānic verses may be cited; for example:

﴿يَسْأَلُهُ مَنِ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلُّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَانِ﴾

“Everyone in the heavens and the earth asks Him. Every day He is engaged in some work.”²

2. *The essential reality of things is unknown.* All the thinkers who believe in the real nature of things as unknown, such as the Muslim philosophers and scholars, also believe in the essential reality of things as unknown. Among these Muslim scholars are Ibn Sīnā, Fārābī, Ibn Rushd, Bahmanyār, Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā Rāzī, Īrānshahrī, Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

² *Sūrat al-Rahmān* 55:29.

Mīr Dāmād, Şadr al-Muta'allihīn Shīrāzī, and Mīr Findiriskī. Positivist thinkers also believe that the essential reality of things is unknown.

Among the thinkers who believe in the essential reality of things as unknown are Kant, Filisteh Dulamneh (?), Herbert Spencer, Heron von Helmholtz, Blaise Pascal, Max Planck, John Locke, Maine Dubiran (?), Kent (?), Bernard Bolzano, Voltaire, George Santayana, Joseph Dymaystr (?), Antoine Kernu (?), Oliver Ladzh (?), Schopenhauer, Jean Filo (?), Baruch Spinoza, William Hamilton, Thomas Carlyle, and Heidegger.

Hippolyte Taine says that acquiring perception of the essential reality of things is impossible but he himself has not defined it. Yet, can these principles be proved by science or something else? Emile Boutroux, Umov, Oswald Kulpe, Albert Einstein, Weisskopf, Arthur Fine, Weizsäcker, Bernard d'Espagnat (who describes the essential reality of things as 'veiled reality'), and Schrödinger share the same view. These [last] two thinkers also consider the essential reality of things comprehensible but they have not yet presented the scientific way to attain it. Schrödinger is famous for this statement: "Modern science is as far as the science of the ancient Greeks in discovering the laws of nature."¹ So, he can also be included in this group.

3. *Indivisible particles in the mental realm are the Reality.* Among those who support this view are Democritus and Leucippus.²

4. *Water is the Reality.* Thales must be mentioned as one of those who subscribe to this view.

5. *Air is the Reality.* Among those who support this view are Anaximenes, Diogenes Laertius and Archelaus.

6. *Numbers and extension of subject in theoretical geometry is the Reality.* The supporters of this view are personalities like Pythagoras and René Descartes.

7. *Matter and form are the Reality:* Of the supporters of this view, the names of such figures as Anaxagoras, St. Bonaventure, and all proponents of prime matter.

¹ *Tahlili az Didgāh-hā-ye Falsafī-ye Fizikdānān-e Mu'āṣir* (*An Analysis of the Philosophical Viewpoints of Contemporary Physicists*), p. 245.

² Leucippus or Leukippos (first half of 5th century BCE): one of the earliest Greeks to develop the theory of atomism – the idea that everything is composed entirely of various imperishable, indivisible elements called atoms – which was elaborated in greater detail by his pupil and successor, Democritus. [Trans.]

8. *The primary truth (genus) is the Reality.* Arthrina (?) is among the proponents of this view.

It is clear that each of these things claimed to be the essential reality of things—in view of the mental state of the respective claimants—has received considerable attention. For example, numbers for Pythagoras is the most pervasive truth in the world of nature, present as the essential reality of existents. For this reason, Pythagoras regarded the world as understandable through a mathematical lens. In the same manner, Descartes would look at the world through a geometrical lens, and these two thinkers focus on the detached quantity (number) and attached quantity (extension). When Pythagoras said, “The world of nature is a prison for man,” he was probably referring to the pervasiveness of quantity, which encompasses all levels of this world. But, he has not been mentioned to have indicated number as the reason behind this world being the prison for man. Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Mawlawī (Rūmī) has expressed this correlation in a very elegant literary style:

که در آن بی حرف می روید کلام	ای خدا، جان را تو بنما آن مقام
سوی عرصه‌ی دور پهناز عدم	تا که سازد جان پاک از سر قدم
وین خیال و هست یابد زو نوا	عرصه‌ای بس با گشاد و با فضا
ز آن سبب باشد خیال اسباب غم	تنگتر آمد خیالات از عدم
ز آن شود در وی قمر همچون هلال	باز هستی تنگتر بود از خیال
تنگتر آمد که زندانی است تنگ	باز هستی جهان حس و رنگ
جانب ترکیب حسها می کشد	علت تنگی است ترکیب و عدد
گر یکی خواهی بدان جانب بران	ز آن سوی حس عالم توحید دان

O God, reveal to the soul that place where speech is growing without letters,

That the pure soul may make of its head a foot towards the far-stretching expanse of non-existence—

An expanse very ample and spacious; and from it this phantasy and being is fed.

Imagination is narrower than non-existence: therefore, phantasy is the cause of pain.

Existence, again, is narrower than Imagination: hence, in it, moons become like the moon that has waned.

Again, the existence of the world of sense and colour is narrower, for it is a narrow prison.

The cause of narrowness is composition and number: the senses are moving towards composition.

Know that the world of Unification lies beyond sense: if you want Unity, march in that direction.¹

Among these limited and general concepts, atoms, primary water and air are more indicative of the reality outside the human essence, but the limitation of their identities is convincingly applicable to the entire world of nature. Yet, science has not accepted any of the abovementioned concepts as the essential reality of things.

9. *Living particles (monads)*: Giordano Bruno, Leibniz, Herbert Spencer, Jean-Marie Guyau, Hermann Lotze, and Fechner are among the proponents of this view.

This view is also cited from some philosophical schools of thought such as Hylozoism, which holds that prime matter possesses life, and it is also believed by those who support the impossibility of producing life from a non-living entity (animate from inanimate), as substantiated by scientific and philosophical reasoning. Qur'ānic verses point out this notion that all beings sing the glory of God; for example, this passage:

﴿يَسِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾

“Whatever there is in the heavens glorifies Allah and whatever there is in the earth.”²

And the reason for this is as follows:

کی تواند که شود هستی بخش	ذات نایافته از هستی بخش
ناید از وی صفت آبدھی	خشک ابری که شود زآب تھی
	وفاقد الشيء لا يعطيه

¹ *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 1, lines 3092-3099, pp. 333, 335. [Trans.]

² *Sūrat al-Jum‘ah* 62:1; *Sūrat at-Taghābun* 64:1.

“That who lacks something cannot give it.”

A scientific reason is acceptable because that which does not have life—assuming that it must give life—is clearly a contradictory proposition. If matter does not possess the origin of life, living things coming into existence from it is a contradiction not permitted by any philosophical school or scientific law.

10. *Reality is discernable by the human mind.* The supporters of this view are Copernicus, George Berkeley,¹ Boscovich John Dewey, and Nietzsche.

Although this group of thinkers has diverse opinions, they all agree that the mind that can discern the reality, which necessitates its concrete existence. It seems farfetched to dismiss the very essential reality of things with the requisite of the channel of the senses and mental faculty, and to say that if the mind does not perceive a thing, it follows that it does not exist!²

¹. George Berkeley, also known as Bishop Berkeley (1685 – 1753): an Anglo-Irish philosopher whose primary achievement was the advancement of a theory he called “immaterialism” (later referred to as “subjective idealism” by others), which denies the existence of material substance and instead contends that familiar objects are only ideas in the minds of perceivers, and as a result cannot exist without being perceived. [Trans.]

². Given this, in my book *Mawlāwī wa Jahānbīnīhā (Rūmī and Worldviews)*, I have presented three reasons for dismissing idealism, which I shall mention here due to their importance in this discourse.

First reason – the unity of perception and the diversity of the perceived with this explanation that the idealist must be told: The function of the eyes is to see appearances of shapes, colors and others, and this is a phenomenon or activity which is the exclusive function of the eyes. We can see when we look at a chair; we can see that the specific shape of the chair is not a pen; it is not a piece of bread; it is not a sea; it is not an apple either. When one looks at each of the mentioned things, he can see its specific shape and color and not any other thing. If these things have diverse reality in the concrete world outside the sight, then from where does the diversity in our viewpoints originate? Moreover, the function of the mind which is to reflect the existents and appearances in the concrete world is nothing but a phenomenon and that is reflecting concrete things. So, from where do all these differences in the reflected things originate?

Second reason – the reality or truth that wavers between itself and other than itself can never be possible. Without doubt, that which is real is a specific thing in reality (although the way of proving it is my perception) and not any other thing which wavers between itself and other than itself. For example, from a distance I can see an

11. *The essential reality of things is an abstraction of the “ego”.* The role of the “ego” in the philosophy of Fichte is identical with the role of the “mind” in the philosophy of Hegel. With the expression that “The ego established itself and therefore it equally established the non-ego,” it follows that the entire universe is a result of the establishment of both the ego and the non-ego. This thought helps in comprehending the greatness of the ego, but there is no scientific proof that the essential reality is only the “ego” or that essential reality emanates from the “ego”.

12. *The “ego” and “non-ego”:* Schelling says, “The world and the ego, whether within the essence or outside, are of one genus and emanate from

object in the desert and I do not know if it is a stone or a person. That which is real is either a stone and not a person, or a person and not a stone. Due to the distance from the object, I am not sure if it is a stone or a person but in reality one of them is definite and not indefinite. And idealist can even say that what I can see is a thing whose reality is uncertain! If ever he makes such a claim, then he is not a world-viewer but a self-viewer whose ideal place is the coffeeshops of the Sophists during the ancient time. It is this idealist which cannot prove his own self which has no reflection in his own mind.

The idealists may possibly cite the lack of definite new physical form and say: “In today’s conceptual and fundamental atomic issues, event or happening is definite and prior to the occurrence of an event, we cannot see anything definite about it.” In reply to this, first of all, if in our knowledge and understanding, we follow the conclusion ‘I cannot see it, therefore it does not exist,’ then we must dispose of the subjects in psychology, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis because none of the psychological phenomena, my activities and myself which are important fundamental truths of those sciences can be seen. Can we say that they do not exist?! Secondly, an event which is happening has a definite state at every point in the process and after manifesting itself at a certain point, it will have the same definite state although for an observer the same latest point, prior to the occurrence of the event, will be determined with wider possibilities. I do not why they are so frightened by this statement, “The world has an identity beyond itself.”

Third reason – man’s necessity for having stances vis-à-vis the realities apart from himself. Let us explain. The coldness of weather compels him to wear warm clothes. He runs away from a beast of prey. He changes his direction when there is a hole in front of him. He looks for light in order to see an object. These stances vis-à-vis is the best proof of the permanence of the reality apart from oneself. Man knows that realities are in contact with him whether he can perceive them or not. As can be observed, in explaining the criterion for the essential reality of things, the school of idealism does not also cite science to support its claim. In fact, science is inconsistent with this school of thought.

the same origin.” Since Schelling acknowledges the existence of another power in nature different from outward concrete powers and the power in the soul also exists in nature, it can be said that his theory also cannot be studied through pure science in the so-called contemporary period.

11. Substantial Matter consists of matter and intellect, particularly its mathematical activity, and this matter has no attached extension. Bertrand Russell, Heisenberg and Niels Bohr are among the supporters of this theory.

These figures and their likes regard the essential reality of things as a two-dimensional reality (subjective or intelligible, and objective). Has the advancement in science and technology been directly premeditated by philosophers, logicians and scientists with a specific orientation in relation to the desired results so that all the scientific and technological processes and their outcomes have been realized with utmost precision and logical pattern?

Our main problem concerning the relationship of science with the realities in the universe is not the exact knowledge of the technical nature of science, which, nowadays, has preoccupied our minds. This is because scientific discoveries [and inventions] in the ancient world and in the last two centuries have made humanity triumph in the realms of both science and technology. Nowadays, most discoverers [and inventors] either do not have the necessary information about the technical discourses and terms in science (such as universality in its abstract sense, predictability, unfalsifiability, experimentation, observation, and their stages and conditions), or their information is insufficient. At any rate, they have introduced abundant discoveries [and inventions] into the domain of science. For example, Thomas Edison¹ who has been credited with approximately 950 inventions, Pasteur² with extraordinary inventions, and Nobel,³ with over 350 patents under his name (and despite the lack of formal secondary and tertiary level education) had no professional expertise in the respective

¹. Thomas Alva Edison (1847 – 1931): an American inventor, scientist, and businessman who developed many devices that greatly influenced life around the world, including the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and a long-lasting, practical electric light bulb. [Trans.]

². Louis Pasteur (1822-95): a French chemist and microbiologist who was a pioneer in pasteurization and the use of vaccines. [Trans.]

³. Alfred Bernhard Nobel (1833 – 1896): a Swedish chemist, engineer, innovator, and armaments manufacturer. [Trans.]

branches of science. In fact, they also did not have totally extensive and accurate knowledge of the respective branches of science compared to the professional experts. Of course, direct and indirect endeavor and quest for the realities are an essential requisite of discovering and inventing. In order to elaborate this point, we shall cite the case of a very famous personality, viz. Hermann von Helmholtz (1821 – 1894).

Of the three physicists mentioned by Planck in 1935, Helmholtz is the most famous. He is one of the multi-talented scholars that the world has so far produced. Of course, he cannot be regarded as a mere physicist because he had neither formal education nor any degree in physics. And until 1871 when he accepted the offer of professorship in physics at the Berlin University—that is, the most credible position in German physics—he had never officially taught physics before. Helmholtz has also important works in medicine, physiology, chemistry, mathematics, philosophy, and linguistics. Notwithstanding this, he always considered himself as an “inborn physicist”, and given the numerous great works he had in physics, he truly deserved the title.

Heinrich Hertz,¹ the most renowned student of Helmholtz, has described his share in research, thus: “Delving into the details, as the peculiarity of all research studies of Helmholtz, is futile. If whatever will be omitted in writing be divided among some men of knowledge, this will be sufficient for all of them to become famous! If a scientist had only done Helmholtz’s research in the field of electricity, we could have regarded him as one of the cream of the crop in electricity. If one of the people of knowledge had not done anything except discover the laws of circular motion of fluid, he could have boasted of attaining one of the most elegant discoveries in mechanics.

“If a person would have presented the same reflections of Helmholtz on the acquired and real peculiarities of space, no one could have denied that he is endowed with the blessing of ingenuity in mathematics. But the awareness that all these discoveries, that belong to some individuals, actually belong to a single person is a source of delight for us. The possession of these feats by a single person falsifies the accidental nature of each of them.

“We consider these achievements a proof of the existence of a gifted person

¹. Heinrich Rudolf Hertz (1857 – 1894): a German physicist who clarified and expanded the electromagnetic theory of light that had been put forth by Maxwell. [Trans.]

who goes far beyond our capabilities. And our knowing this elicits our praise... Undoubtedly, for the span of 23 years, from 1871 until his death, Helmholtz was a forerunner of German physics, leading the scientific development in Germany and reaching an outstanding status in the world at the end of the nineteenth century. His colleagues recognized his lone status and, due to the love they had for the station of a single person, they have adoringly recognized him as the imperial honor in German physics.”¹

In view of the appearance of knowledge and discoveries, we arrive at the conclusion that the efforts of the professional experts of the positivists and logicians are nothing but organizing the realities after their appearance in the arena of knowledge, whose foundation is sometimes molded by their a priori principles. The outcome of this practice is more or less like organizing a bowl, plates, spoons, and forks on a dining table, and consciously or unconsciously, the people do not enter to select the food according to the arrangement on the table, table-spread or dining table for the elite. This is while the cooks prepare the food and drink.

This fact is acknowledged by approximately all the authorities in the field of discoveries and inventions. In his introduction to Experimental Medicine, Claude Bernard thus explains:

“No rule or order can stipulate that at the time of observing a particular object, a correct and fruitful idea, which is a sort of prior mental guideline for correct research, would come to the mind of the researcher. It is only after the idea came to the mind that one sees how it must be consistent with specific stipulations of logical rules, which must not be violated by any researcher. But the cause of its emergence is unknown and its nature completely personal, and it is something special, which is considered the source of initiative, invention and ingenuity of every person.”²

Alfred North Whitehead thus says, “That we must think in order to attain the truths is something exactly contrary to the reality, because a great deal of advancements (discoveries and inventions) have not been a product of

¹. *Majalleh-ye Fizik*, no. 1, pp. 1-4.

². Filisin Shaleh (?), *Shinākht-e Rawishhā-ye ‘Ulūm* (Knowing the Scientific Methods), trans. Yahyā Mahdawī, p. 42.

organized thoughts.”¹

The most fundamental pillar of discoveries is undoubtedly and categorically intuition or inspiration. At most, there is a difference of opinion on its explanation. A group of great thinkers of both the East and the West believe that inspiration is a divine phenomenon. Among those who belong to this group are Socrates, Plato, Carlyle, Sorokin,² and Marie Tien. George F. Kneller says, “One of the oldest concepts is creationism, which revolves around the axis that the Creator possesses a divine inspiration. Without doubt, this concept bespeaks of the extraordinary initiative involved in great masterpieces of the creator. This concept is basically mentioned by Plato, who stated that at the time of creating something, since he is not in control of himself, the artist is influenced by a superior force. According to Plato, Socrates says to Ion the Poet, ‘The gift which you possess of speaking excellently... is not an art, but, as I was just saying, an inspiration; there is a divinity moving you.’³ This viewpoint that the artist acquires inspiration from a supra-human power is also prevalent today. For example, Sorokin believes that the greatest findings of the Creator are a product of supernatural-super-sensory power. The power he conceives at the time of creating [something] is highly unknown and transcends beyond our consciousness. Marie Tien expresses that creationism emanates from beyond nature. The creator’s power is based upon knowing the existence of an unconscious or semi-conscious mind which Plato and other men of wisdom were aware of, and inattention to this point under the mere pretext of Freudian self-unconsciousness is a sign of lack of wisdom of our time.”⁴

If the phenomenon of intuition or inspiration were scientifically explicable then, just as chess players (and not the realists) claim scientific improvements, the history of knowledge and science would have been definitely more glorious than we have currently treading.

Those who, on account of extreme allergy to the word ‘science’ and its

¹. *Sargudhasht-e Andīshehhā*.

². Pitirim Alexandrovich Sorokin (1889 – 1968): was a Russian-American sociologist best known for his contributions to the social cycle theory. [Trans.]

³. Plato, *Ion*, trans. Benjamin Jowett, available online at
<http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/ion.html>. [Trans.]

⁴. George F. Kneller, *Hunar wa ’Ilm wa Khalāqiyat* (*Art, Science and Creativity*), trans. Dr. Sayyid ‘Alī Aṣghar Musaddad, pp. 20-21.

derivatives, want to deny every fact which is outside their mental perimeter must know that if intuition, illumination, inspiration and the like were beyond the interpretation and analysis of pure science, then

1. We were not supposed to be in our present state of knowledge;
2. It is clear that given such a premise (that intuition, illumination, and inspiration are beyond scientific interpretation and analysis), we could have prevented all errors which caused intellectual and financial losses, wasting of time and digression from the direction of science and learning. Yet, unfortunately, it can be said that the number of errors in the theories and in that which is scientific are far more than what is normal. We have encountered a lot of such expressions as “This hypothesis has been proved by experiment” and “There is no doubt on this issue from the scientific viewpoint.” Of course, subsequent experiments, observations and other methods of research have proven their invalidity.
3. If it were possible for us to totally manage intuition, illumination and inspiration, certainly we could have managed development, progress and enhancement of science and knowledge in a direct fashion with more intelligible orientations.

From these discussions, we arrive at this very important conclusion that the principles and fundamentals of scientific hypotheses are based upon intuition, illumination and inspiration which are beyond science. That is, non-scientific phenomena shape scientific hypotheses and make them practically beneficial.

Attention paid to the account of discoveries and innovations will serve as a good guideline for us. You can come across the following points in the history of technology and inventions:

“For many of the different inventions, nay even far more, there is no point in urging that, in the period of history we talk about, all technological devices and machines have been more or less based upon unsystematic and haphazard method. In order to determine the necessary thickness for constructing a column, or to design the half body of a ship, or to compute the height of a waterfall, which is supposed to turn the wheel of the watermill, the engineers at that time could not apply the modern engineering method. That is, there were no general rules at that time and all their knowledge consisted of a set of experiences throughout many centuries and periods and

were applied randomly. It is exactly like the Sumerian people who, in every state or condition for the period of four thousand years, had a specific prescription at their disposal according to their past experiences. These pieces of knowledge had never been inferred from the theoretical principles taught in schools...”¹

“The industry during the period of modernity can never be likened to the set of systematic innovations which is the single source of all cases of utility. In fact, on the contrary, it can be regarded as an effusion of each of the inventions without any relation with one another—innovations which are a product of intuition and the exigency of time.”²

“The extraordinary effusion of this kind of invention, devoid of any importance and only a product of inspirations and exigencies of time, will appear uncoordinated to us when we see that a set of irrational activities, consistent with the norm of that period, were also carried out; for example, the pursuit for the eternal (immortality, alchemy, water of life, etc.). This was one such astounding craft, solely based upon the simplest experiments, whose main element was mere acquisition of literacy and its application, and carried out without any sort of scientific concepts. Even in most of the mentioned cases, usual criticism did not serve as a guide. Without doubt, it proved the presence of a kind of sagacity and dexterity, but it was impossible for it to provide us the way of attaining universal or general advancements.”³

“At that time, this passionate and profound soul (Denis Papin⁴) had been more than ever engrossed in thinking about the power of water vapor. The peculiarity of the problem was that due to the passage of time, the nature of the problem expanded and changed in his view. In the beginning, Denis Papin had only in his mind a simple technique of bringing up the water from a mineral well, but gradually the horizon turned wider for him. The said inventor rightly guessed that beyond the problem of bringing up water from a mineral well was possibly the generation of an extensive source of energy,

¹. Pierre Rousseau, *Tārīkh-e Ṣanāye’ wa Ikhṭirā’at* (*Histoire des techniques et des inventions*), trans. Hasan Ṣaffārī, pp. 186-187.

². *Ibid.*, p. 190.

³. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁴. Denis Papin (1647 - c. 1712): a French-born physicist, mathematician and inventor, best known for his pioneering invention of the steam digester, the forerunner of the steam engine and the pressure cooker. [Trans.]

which could be used in bringing up water from a mineral well and pumping, or setting a new vehicle and a sewing machine, ship and means of public transport.”¹

Max Planck said, “Imagine a miner who for many years was digging the ground in search for minerals. But one night he found a grain of gold which he never expected. It is somehow clear that if he had not found this grain of gold, somebody else would have found it.”² There are very important ups and downs in the course of science which are caused by the commission of errors and mistakes in the realm of science.

¹. *Tārīkh-e Ṣanāye ‘wa Ikhtirā‘at (Histoire des techniques et des inventions)*, p. 389.

². *Ibid.*, p. 685.

Chapter 6 ***The Limits of Science in Knowing the Reality***

Opinion-survey for Identifying the Reality in the Realm of Science!

“At present, the physicists have a consensus of opinion that there is no consensus of opinion among them about the condition of cases in the microphysical world! In order to show the existing crisis in the thought of contemporary physicists, it is sufficient to pay attention to an opinion survey recently conducted at the end of a conference. This conference with the theme, “Microphysical Reality and Quantum Formalism”, was held in the autumn of 1985 in Italy. One of the basic questions asked was: Is there another that exerts influence, or none? Einstein used to reject it (Einsteinian Position). At the conclusion of this conference, two of the physicists distributed the questionnaires among the participating physicists. The questions commenced with this introduction:

“This conference has shown that there are many differences in expressing quantum mechanics of recent experiments. The only way of getting out of this mental dilemma is to resort to statistical data. Therefore, we respectfully ask you to honestly answer the questions below.”

Fifty-six of the participants answered the questions and we shall present here parts of the questions and answers:

Question: Do you believe in the Einsteinian Position, i.e. the lack of possibility of signaling or influence with speed more than that of the speed of light?

Answer: 54% = yes, 39% = no, 7% undecided

Question: Do you believe that the recent experiments have invalidated the Einsteinian Position?

Answer: 30% = yes, 57% = no, 13% undecided

Question: Do you believe that the recent experiments on signaling have confirmed the Ultra Light?

Answer: 5% = yes, 89% = no, 6% undecided

Question: Do you think that the recent experiments have confirmed the influence of the Ultra Light?

Answer: 21% = yes, 52% = no, 27% undecided

Question: Do you think that a term for quantum mechanics has never been found like the one well chosen for the classical mechanic?

Answer: 71% = yes, 18% = no, 11% undecided

Question: Are you a realist?

Answer: 86% = yes, 2% (one person) = no, 12% undecided

Question: Do you believe that there is a world apart from this world (without considering the elements of your perception) after your death?

Answer: 98% = yes, 2% = no, 0% undecided

Question: Is the glass transparent in a dark place?

Answer: 64% = yes, 9% = no, 27% undecided

Question: Do you believe in a kind of phenomena above the mind, or magic?

Answer: 55% = yes, 18% = no, 27% undecided

Notwithstanding the mental agitation existing in the views of contemporary physicists, the silence has been broken and fundamental questions have been raised again, more or less. There is strong hope that physics will be relieved from the veiled dogmatism engulfing it, and conception of the condition of the microphysical world will not only be explained but also the goal of the physicists theorized.

The state of affairs has been well summarized in this manner:

“An increasing number of scientists have seriously questioned absolute credibility of quantum mechanics. This wariness has reached a point where the founders of quantum mechanics have left the theory in such a way that, though successful in practice, it seriously limits our intuitive knowledge of the microphysical world, and their reasons are, to a great extent, optional and questionable.”¹

¹. *Tahlili az Didgāh-hā-ye Falsafī-ye Fizikdānān-e Mu'āṣir* (*An Analysis of the Philosophical Viewpoints of Contemporary Physicists*), 2nd edition, pp. 29-31.

Declaration of the Bankruptcy of Science*

It is said that in one of the cities in Germany, there was a ruler whose truthfulness and dedication were proverbial. Thieves and brigands were afraid of him while the upright people truly respected him. One day, however, the city dwellers got to know of a dreadful secret; that is, every night, the ruler would change his clothes and bring a pistol with him. He would surreptitiously get out of his house and rob people on the street, taking some items from them by force... Certainly, you would ask: is it not the same story of Halers the Ruler? Perhaps, it is so, but at the same time, the story of mathematics in the latter part of the nineteenth century is also the same.

For the past twenty centuries, the people submitted to it and toed its line. Everyone wanted it to practically interfere and correct him in the smallest matter if his actions were like an affront of the things sacred. But suddenly, the Euclidian principle showed a dismal weakness and the veneer of sanctity attached to it was violently extinguished. The familiar domain of common numbers was crushed by the avalanche of irrational and immeasurable numbers, and the edifice, which was so respected and revered, incurred serious cracks and damages.

But it was not only the great edifice of mathematics which incurred such serious cracks and damages. The entire magnificent castle of science met the same fate. The savage war against Weismann¹ and the barbaric campaign against Lamarck's² laws of inheritance of acquired characteristics (or soft inheritance) commenced. By discovering quanta protons, Planck had rendered a death blow to Leibniz's famous proverb Natura non saltum facit

* Certainly, the extremism in scientism, which reaches the point of science-worship also includes such dissipation, but in our opinion, science cannot be the object of worship, nor is it bankrupt. In fact, these understandings of the reality can be shattered with the hatchet of "This is it and nothing else!" and this is ego-worship, which leads to the fall and failure of "I have progressed".

¹ Friedrich Leopold August Weismann (1834 – 1914): a German evolutionary biologist. [Trans.]

² Jean-Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet, Chevalier de la Marck, often just known as "Lamarck" (1744 – 1829): a French soldier, naturalist, academic and an early proponent of the idea that evolution occurred and proceeded in accordance with natural laws. [Trans.]

(Law of Continuity)¹ and Becquerel² discovered radioactivity. This recent concern, in particular, turned the scientists' wandering into agitation, for it made them face something completely uncommon. A simple element like radium would set free another simple element like helium and turn into a third element like radon. So, what is the main function of Lavoisier's³ principle? Nothing can be extinguished and nothing can create its own self. Is this transformation of radium into lead after undergoing certain processes not really an affirmation of the laws of alchemy that have been ridiculed for a long time? And a subject far more important than it is this: what will happen to the principle of the subsistence of energy, for it seems that the radiation produced by radioactive elements is connected and inexhaustible? From where does this element acquire this great source of energy?

In 1902, Rutherford⁴ and Soddy⁵ replied that the sources of this energy are in the atoms of the element itself. These atoms gradually explode or disintegrate and transmute into atoms of different kinds, and the produced energy is the result of the same disintegration. In reality, radioactivity signifies the death of atoms. It is certain that the scientists had not heartily welcomed such an explanation but, in any case, they entrusted it to fate, for classical physics and chemistry were in the process of extinction then. The principles on which, these two branches of science, were depending after Descartes, were fragmented and extinguished. The young generation wanted to expel the preceding generation, which, for it, was indeed pitiful, and it was perplexed and dumbfounded as to what must be done. The scientific methods, the philosophy of research and mechanical science, with the entire

¹. Introduced by Leibniz based on earlier work by Nicholas of Cusa and Johannes Kepler, the Law of Continuity which is expressed by the proverb *Natura non saltum facit* (Nature does not make a leap) is a heuristic principle that “whatever succeeds for the finite, also succeeds for the infinite”. [Trans.]

². Antoine Henri Becquerel (1852 – 1908): a French physicist, Nobel laureate, and the discoverer of radioactivity along with Marie Curie and Pierre Curie, for which all three won the 1903 Nobel Prize in Physics. [Trans.]

³. Antoine Laurent Lavoisier (1743-1794): French chemist, who is considered the founder of modern chemistry. [Trans.]

⁴. Ernest Rutherford (1871 – 1937): a New Zealand-born British chemist and physicist who became known as the father of nuclear physics. [Trans.]

⁵. Frederick Soddy (1877 – 1956): an English radiochemist who explained, with Ernest Rutherford, that radioactivity is due to the transmutation of elements, now known to involve nuclear reactions. [Trans.]

edifice of the theory of evolution, and whatever Spencer had added to it, were in shambles and crisis. As science as a whole was seriously threatened with bankruptcy, the scientists asked themselves: What shall be the function of today's knowledge? Is it destined to be wiped out at once or will there be something new to replace it?

Limitations in Methodology and Objective

Jules Henri Poincaré explained: "There are some elements in our thinking which we must select. For example, Euclidean geometry, Riemannian geometry and Lobachevskian geometry are of this sort. If we select the first geometry, it does not mean that the reality of this geometry is more than that of others. The reason, rather, is that this geometry is consistent with our experiences in the world. In other words, it is simpler compared to the other types of geometry. In the same manner, the declaration that the earth moves cyclically and that space has three dimensions is simpler compared to other similar principles." Pierre Duhem¹ (1861-1917), professor at the University of *Bordeaux*, also said: "Consistency with experience does not necessarily mean validity and correctness of a theory. All theories that gradually encompass the truth and are closer to it than ever before are correct by themselves." As the philosophers heard the scientists discuss audaciously the futility of knowledge and the lack of power of theories, they sharpened their ears and were informed of the failure of the major theories in mechanical science. But it was particularly astonishing for them that prominent figures like Poincaré and Duhem, experts in thermodynamics, could fiercely talk against the traditions of the nineteenth century. Around this time, the American philosopher William James (1842-1910) defined science in this way: "Science is a set of simple contracts." The Austrian philosopher Ernst Mach² (1838-1916) announced that after all stages, the animal body in reality is nothing but an apparatus of feelings and impressions. Finally, the class of enlightened and educated people totally changed its beliefs.

The extraordinary development of major industries, the spread of violent war initiated by the working class, the establishment of the Paris Commune,³ and

¹. Pierre Maurice Marie Duhem (1861 – 1916): a French physicist, mathematician and philosopher of science, best known for his writings on the indeterminacy of experimental criteria and on scientific development in the Middle Ages. [Trans.]

². Ernst Mach (1838 – 1916): an Austrian physicist and philosopher. [Trans.]

³. Paris Commune: a government that briefly ruled Paris from March 18 to May 28, 1871 and hailed as the first assumption of power by the working class during the

the great campaign launched against religion prompted the bourgeoisie to take the issue seriously and be engrossed in thinking. From the eighteenth century onward, this class presented itself as freedom-lovers, anti-cleric and advocate of Voltaire's ideas, insisting that it had emancipated itself from the shackles of old ideas and introduced itself as an advocate of modern revolutions. At the end of the nineteenth century, however, they also totally changed their ideas. They realized that all the enduring sanctities had been destroyed before their eyes. This generated intense fear in them and, like the student of a magician, they realised that they could no longer control the power which they had generated. As such, they looked for a pretext and suddenly declared that science was not able to do what Auguste Comte, Clyde Kluckhohn, Helmholtz, and Berthelot¹ had attached to it. It must also be acknowledged that the simplicity and contempt of Haeckel's² transformism, the sudden collapse of the laws governing the principle of permanence of energy, the principle of the permanence of matter, and the vacuum which the discovery of x-ray, electron and radioactivity between modern thinking and classical knowledge had created, proved useful for advancing their goal. In 1859, Ferdinand Brunetière³ (1849–1906) announced in Two Worlds Magazine the bankruptcy of science..."⁴

The Balance Sheet of the School of Evolution: "Obviously, from the time of Darwin⁵ and De Vries⁶ the question of evolution has changed a lot! Nowadays, we are as far from the mutationism of the year 1900 as from the transformism of the year 1860; the flaws of the school were disclosed so

Industrial Revolution. [Trans.]

¹. Marcellin Pierre Eugène Berthelot (1827 – 1907): a French chemist and politician noted for the Thomsen-Berthelot principle of thermochemistry. [Trans.]

². Ernst Heinrich Philipp August Haeckel, also written von Haeckel (1834 – 1919): an eminent German biologist, naturalist, philosopher, physician, professor and artist, who discovered, described and named thousands of new species, mapped a genealogical tree relating all life forms, and coined many terms in biology. [Trans.]

³. Ferdinand Brunetière (1849 – 1906): a French writer and critic. [Trans.]

⁴. *Tārīkh-e 'Ulūm (History of Science)*, pp. 693-695.

⁵. Charles Robert Darwin (1809-82): English naturalist and one of the strongest and best-known defenders of organic evolution, whose most important work is *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859). [Trans.]

⁶. Hugo Marie de Vries (1848 – 1935): a Dutch botanist and one of the first geneticists. [Trans.]

early. Initially, the theory of natural selection, insisted by Darwin, could not bring anything into being; rather, it only selected the most favorable of the gradual changes. Then, this question was raised: Why must some parts, such as the wings of Archaeopteryx, which were not fully developed and of no use, gradually develop? Moreover, it is as if the survival of the fittest theory in most cases is accidental in nature, and Morris Colleiry (?) added, "If we consider how many eggs and larvae of insects die in seas, it will be clear that the only factor that decides the survival of creatures is accident and nothing else!" The sudden changes which are mostly mentioned are only about the types and nothing else. It is never seen that a family or a class of creatures has turned into another family. Moreover, the animals or plants that are the outcome of sudden change are mainly the weak and inferior, and they can never be a good representation of the theory of survival of the fittest.

The lack of power of three grand theories, viz. Lamarckism, Darwinism and mutationism has prompted many of the researchers to propose new explanations. A German contemporary of Darwin named Moritz Wagner¹ (1813-1887) announced in 1875 a new theory which was very close to that of Lamarck, saying that "In my opinion, formation of new types is conditioned by geographical factors. Ernst Mayr² modified his view, saying, "I think although these changes depend on external factors, only on certain extent can they develop." Then, Lousti (?) from Holland said, "Perhaps it is necessary for us to look for the cause of evolution in the internal factors identified by Mendel."³ Ganu from France expressed, "In my opinion, evolution takes place by means of 'a prior conformity'. Finally, in 1929, L. Viapleton (1861-1930) boldly and categorically said that if we basically believe in evolutionism, it is obvious that there are absolutely no forms of partition. The proof of this is that the family tree of living organisms in most cases has parallel branches and stems which can rarely be associated with a single root or origin. Transformism is nothing but an illusion and

¹. Moritz Wagner (1813 – 1887): a German explorer, collector, geographer and natural historian. [Trans.]

². Ernst Walter Mayr (1904 – 2005): one of the 20th century's leading evolutionary biologists, and also a renowned taxonomist, tropical explorer, ornithologist, historian of science, and naturalist. [Trans.]

³. Gregor Johann Mendel (1822 – 1884): an Austrian scientist and Augustinian friar who gained posthumous fame as the founder of the new science of genetics. [Trans.]

imagination.”¹

“However, it seems that most of the paleontologists, who are more credible in expressing opinion on this subject, prefer Lamarckism over other proofs, and Professor Colleiry (?) did not hide his inclination to it. But his Lamarckism is modern, and conforms with the discovery of chromosomes and genes.”²

Madison Pole and Dan Pivatar (?) say: “Darwin wanted to determine the produced changes on a complete being, and denying this point is like putting the cart before the horse.”

According to the views of Weismann which were presented in 1919-1920, by E.G. Conklin (b. 1863), an American professor at Princeton University, one must look for the causes of changes of the species in the changes undergone by the sperm and primary cells. Conklin expressed it in this way: “All the peculiarities that will later manifest and develop in a complete being take place in the zygote.”

“It is clear that the issue will not just end up here and this question will linger on: What is the source of changes that take place in the zygote? An objection against these views is this: since the researcher has the knowledge and the experiment cannot be transferred by heredity, do you think this specific Lamarckism is not also a mistake?

“How do you know? Yes, at present, it is not transferable but was it not possible that it was transferable at the beginning of the geological periods? In contrast to these long periods, our experiences are so limited! And it is very possible that at present, the sperm has found a means of resisting and opposing external changes.

“Definitely, the issue is yet to be resolved. The more one delves into it, the more problems and ambiguities will surface. At any rate, if the problem of the mechanism of evolution is yet to be resolved, the issue itself is definitely doubtful. Another proof to it has been obtained through a study of the life of parasites which undergo drastic and definite changes.

“As we know, parasitism refers to the state of an organism living at the expense of another organism such that it gradually exhausts and extinguishes

¹ *Tārīkh-e ‘Ulūm (History of Science)*, pp. 709-710.

² *Ibid.*, p. 712.

the other organism, and this the same thing the worms in the stomach do to the human being and bindweeds to the plants.

“As can be observed, when a parasite totally attaches itself to another organism which becomes the source of its nourishment, that organism turns weak and gradually dies.”¹

On page 720 [of the book *Tārīkh-e ‘Ulūm* (History of Science)], this point is mentioned, thus: “Today, all discoveries will be discussed again leading towards the unity of matter” and on page 688, we can read this heading: “The seat of authority of analysis has shaken. And, on page 697, this heading has been discussed: “The school of evolution faces problems.”

Has science reached the optimum depth and width of the realities in the universe that it has the final words about them all, at all times, under all conditions for mankind?

From the earlier discussions, we can arrive at the conclusion that science has never reached such depth and width and it will never have the final words about all realities in the universe for mankind.

God, the Glorious, says:

﴿وَمَا أُوتِيْتُم مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا﴾

“And you have not been given of the knowledge except a few [of you].”²

He also says:

﴿وَقُلْ رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا﴾

“And say, ‘My Lord! Increase me in knowledge’.”³

It is also stated in another place:

﴿يُرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الْذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ حَسِيرٌ﴾

“Allah will raise those of you who have faith and those who have been given knowledge in rank, and Allah is well aware of what you do.”⁴

First of all, before stating the limitation of science and its inability to delve

^{1.} *Ibid.*, pp. 712-713.

^{2.} *Sūrat al-Isrā’* (or *Banī Isrā’ il*) 17:85.

^{3.} *Sūrat Tā Hā* 20:114.

^{4.} *Sūrat al-Mujādilah* 58:11.

into all dimensions of all the realities in the universe, we shall briefly touch on the greatness and necessity of science and life-giving power.

خاتم ملک سلیمان است علم جمله عالم صورت و جان است علم

The seal of Solomon's kingdom is knowledge / The scholar's statement is the form and soul of knowledge.

Now, the hope-giving breezes of man's ardent desire to revive the lofty human values in the arena of human life by God's favor have started blowing.

Now, the all-encompassing sun of Divine religion has appeared from behind the artificial clouds of the ignorant and egoistic domineers, thereby waking the sleepy ones on earth by its early morning touches. Now, by presenting the quantities and qualities of its utility in the vast realm of the universe, science has come forward to remove the allegation of its being against religion. Now, the inhuman objectives of the egoists have been exposed. Now, the veils, covering the claims and pretensions of the group feigning support for science, have been lifted.

Now, by accurately identifying and assessing these two magnificent truths, the perspicacious scholars and authorities of both religion and science have sincerely and categorically declared the necessity for perfecting man's "rational life" by means of coordinating science and religion. It is only proper that along this path which leads to the real felicity of man, more serious and expansive steps must be taken without any delay, and the thick veils, placed by the anti-religion and science ignoramuses or geniuses, on the real face of science and religion be lifted up.¹

By quoting these everlasting words of Max Plack, who is undoubtedly one of

¹. The story of science and religion is like that of two extremely kind brothers who had been separated from each other for sometime and gradually each of them adopted the customs and appearance of the place where he lived in although they were really looking for each other. As a result, each of them assumed an appearance unfamiliar and antagonistic to the other. When the people of the two places where each of them lived waged war against each other, the two brothers also faced each other in the battlefield. As they got closer in a fight, they recognized each other and threw away their respective swords. They embraced each other and on account of the considerable clout each of them had, the two warring groups (rigid scientists and ritualistic religious devotees) were reconciled and thereafter they live together in peace and harmony.

the fathers of the 20th century science, we shall conclude the primary introduction:

“Concerning the relationship between religion and science, we must also state that the objection against religion, that it denies life, is not consistent with the perspective of science and contradictory to its principles. Any denial of the value of life is a denial of human thinking, and therefore, in the final analysis, it is not only denial of the real nature of science but also denial of religion itself. I think more scientists agree with my view and they will raise their hands of agreement with the fact that religious nihilism is also destructive to science.

“There will never be any real conflict between science and religion. Each of them is complementary to the other. Every serious person and thinker will be aware that if all the powers of human beings are supposed to be utilized in coordination and harmony with one another, one must acknowledge the existence of a religious element in his nature and strive hard to nourish it. And it is not accidental that the great thinkers in all periods have been profound religious figures, even if they have not so much expressed religiosity.”¹

Five Reasons behind the Necessity and Greatness of Science

It is obvious that among the reasons behind the necessity for, and greatness of, science, five of them are preeminent and more important:

First reason: The astonishing activities and results of the extensive, in-depth and relative knowledge in the realm of the four types of relationships, that have been so far at the disposal of humanity.

Second reason: Science deals only with that which is within its domain of expertise and explores it through its specific tools. With this destructive statement, “I do not accept as reality except that which I can see,” science will never undermine its credibility and value, for science is aware that for discovering the realities, the tools that it usually utilizes are natural senses, laboratories and mental activities of the scientist. Given its structural peculiarities and the environmental conditions of the elements of perception and special goals, colored realities—and not the realities as they are—are presented to the scientist. In all branches of science, we can clearly see this

¹. Max Planck, ‘Ilm beh Kujā Mīrawad? (Where is Science Going?), trans. Ahmad ārām, pp. 234-235.

very meaningful and enduring statement, “In the great stage play of existence, we are both performers and spectators” as elucidated today by the authorities, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western, from Laotzi the Chinese philosopher to Robert Oppenheimer¹ the Westerner. And for this, we do not see any need for citation and reasoning.

Third reason: By distinguishing the realities in the arena of existence as being or non-being, science does not deal with do’s and don’ts, although the ways of finding out their reality are different from one another. By considering what science seeks in the realities and that the do’s and don’ts are also part of the realities, the said distinction is a kind of opposition to science. In the end, by proving them real, science will emerge victorious.

In order to accept the strength of this reason, we must scrutinize the statement of Max Planck, quoted to substantiate the fourth reason.

Fourth reason: As our knowledge and understanding of the laws governing the universe increase, the universe’s sanctity also increases, for, which, two basic conditions are necessary:

First condition – faith in our existence in a meaningful world based on a sublime goal, as lucidly demonstrated by this Qur’ānic verse:

﴿إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ﴾

“Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him do we indeed return.”²

Second condition – knowledge of the realities in the universe.

In order to acknowledge the greatness and sanctity of science, we shall only cite the statements of Max Plack:

“It is through the cooperation between understanding and willpower that the finest fruit of philosophy can be found and this fruit is nothing but morality. Science enhances life through the moral values, thereby acquiring the love for the truth and the sacred—love for the truth about us which manifests in the incessant struggle to acquire a more accurate knowledge about the material and spiritual world, and love for the sacred in the sense that any

¹. Julius Robert Oppenheimer (1904 – 1967): an American theoretical physicist and professor of physics who is often called the “father of the atomic bomb” for his role in the Manhattan Project, the World War II project that developed the first nuclear weapons. [Trans.]

². *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:156.

advancement in knowledge places us before our existence.”¹

Fifth reason: The crucial role of science in defending its original identity by, gradually, presenting the realities. It is an essential proposition that real science refers to the clarification of a reality with which the scientist has established connection. Real science is that whose clarification of a reality is perfect. A lack of just 1 % of the desired clarity through science, undermines the identity of science. We cannot call it a scientific reality, and if we use the term ‘science’ in such a case, it is necessary to indicate the one percent lacking, stating that our degree of guess and certainty has not reached the degree of real knowledge. The scientific claims of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially in social sciences, later turned to be false. We shall mention examples of the issues which science, inspite of serious efforts, has not found yet.

We shall begin this discussion with two quotations from Camille Flammarion,² an astromoner, and Oparin,³ a biologist, famous scientists:

“You can see and you think, but what is thinking? No one has the power to answer this question. We take a walk; what is the essence of this muscular action? No one knows. We can see that my willpower is a non-material power; in fact, all my psychic properties are non-material. Whenever I desire to raise my hands, I can see that my willpower makes a material thing move. What is the truth of this happening? What is the truth of this medium which causes the execution of a usual command from a vital faculty? No one can be found who can answer this question. How do nerves transfer external images to the mind? How can the truth of this thinking be perceived? What is its agent [and not its scene of action]? What is the nature of mental action? I can ask you similar questions for the next ten years while the greatest mind cannot answer my simplest questions.”⁴

¹. Max Planck, *Ilm beh Kujā Mīrawad?* (*Where is Science Going?*), trans. Ahmad ārām, p. 235.

². Nicolas Camille Flammarion (1842 – 1925): a French astronomer and prolific author. [Trans.]

³. Alexander Ivanovich Oparin (1894 – 1980): a Soviet biochemist notable for his contributions to the theory of the origin of life. [Trans.]

⁴. Muḥammad Farid Wajdī, *‘Alā Atlāl al-Madhhab al-Māddī* (*On the Slumbers of the Materialist School*), p. 38, quoting the book *Quwwā-ye Majhūl dar Ṭabi‘at* (*Unknown Power in Nature*) by Camille Flammarion.

This is what Oparin says: “It is only through such evolutionary understanding that we can possibly find the truth. Not only can we understand what takes place in the bodies of living organisms and why, but we will also be able to answer seven million ‘whys’ before us, for really knowing the essence of life.”¹ Definitely, if we add these questions “why movement must be evolutionary?” and “why evolution must follow this path?” to the abovementioned seven million questions, we will have seven million and two questions. Fortunately, Oparin himself has been aware of these two questions. In another place, he says: “Unfortunately, the information about this evolution has not yet reached the point when we can systematically determine its direction and pay attention to the quantitative changes in the structure of active transfer of cases which happened in specific stages of the evolution of the world.”²

Erwin Schrödinger explained: “Without the existence of God, one cannot answer the question of the emergence of life, through an intellectual method.” He also said: “The basic elements of the living being are not an effect of a rude human (nature); it is rather a very subtle work done on the basis of certain principles of God’s perfected quantum mechanics.”³ In the introduction of the book *Life = Physics + Chemistry? Life from the Perspective of Eminent Physicists* (page 26), Bernd-Olaf Küppers⁴ is quoted to have said: “Man will understand the more important concept of the complexity of living systems when he organizes (elucidates) the abundance of possibilities (probabilities) of the basic structure of the hereditary molecule.” [According to Pascal Jordan:] In a chain of molecules with four million basic structures, 102,400,000 different channels for complete organization can possibly be considered whereas the number of electrons that constitute the great universe is 10120.”⁵

Now, we shall enumerate the questions which science has not yet provided convincing answers to in spite of incessant efforts.

¹ Alexander Oparin, *Hayāt, Ṭabī‘at, Manshā’ wa Takāmul-e īn* (*Life, Its Nature, Origin and Evolution*), p. 183.

² *Ibid.*, p. 299.

³ Erwin Schrödinger, *Was ist Leben? (What is Life)*, p. 151.

⁴ Bernd-Olaf Küppers (1944 -): a German physicist, philosopher and theoretical biologist. [Trans.]

⁵ *Niyāyesh* Monthly Magazine, no. 2 (original German text).

1. What is the way of affirming the objective reality outside the mind, and in general, the way of affirming the “ego” vis-à-vis the “alter ego”, pure science or pure scientific philosophy?
2. What is matter? Matter in its absolute sense is treated as the replacement of the sublime truths in the universe, and not as particular natural elements and phenomena defined according to specific stances and goals.
3. What is motion? What is energy and what are its parts?
4. Are the types of motion limited to the ones utilized by basic science and its derivative sciences?
5. What is the nature of relationship between matter and motion?
6. Why does matter move?
7. Why does matter move in a certain way?
8. Granted that the system of the universe is open, can it be said that the same motion in the same path is eternal or not? What is the proof?
9. Is the division of existence into objective and subjective beings based upon a rational foundation?
10. Is the real demarcation line between the “ego” and the “alter ego” specific, or is it a conventional demarcation line, as some authorities have believed about the fundamental particles in nature?
11. Since our knowledge and information is a product of the “ego and its faculties of perception”, and the “alter ego and the conditions of the perceived object”, what is the scientific basis of the claim that the mind reflects the objective realities without the interference of the faculties of perception and conditions of the perceived object? Is it not so, as Laotzi the Chinese philosopher declared as quoted by Neils Bohr of Denmark that “In the great stage play of existence, we are both performers and spectators”?
12. Is the demarcation line between the “ego” and the “alter ego” in science and knowledge, absolute or relative? Granted that it is relative, what is the factor for its relativity? What is the quality and quantity of our pieces of information? Are they only the stances of the perceiving agent, or the perceived objects and our mentally preconceived principles?
13. Are the pieces of information and discernments that man acquires such as, bringing to fruition the seeds sown within his self, or are they

acquisitions and reflections? Should the unprecedented mental activities be distinguished from the pieces of information, which are activated by means of teaching, learning, experiments, and observations? In the parlance of Westerners, are they a priori, or reflective, acquired activities that have no precedence within?

14. What is the correct interpretation of the abstract activities of the mind, abstract concepts of universal numbers and universal propositions, and their essential or accidental differences?

15. In case of stability of our necessary relationship between the laws of nature and the laws pertaining to human realities which are outside the domain of one's freewill and based upon realism, in which the necessity for laws of a reality is actual, not an abstract phenomenon, which is against this necessity which is a contingency. Is it possible that based upon the rule of changing thesis into antithesis or producing thesis out of itself, there will be a time when out of the interactive composition of the two elements of hydrogen and oxygen with specific amount, a sugarloaf or a train with twenty wagons will come into being? This question is asked assuming the invalidity of the theory of pursuit of event, according to the view of David Hume, and not considering all realities in nature proceeding from above nature, and the existing necessity among their laws related to the human stance in the domain of knowledge.

16. Has the law of "the end justifies the means" any conditions, and is it absolute? Let us assume that it is conditional; will the scientific truths not become ambiguous? This is while scientific truths always talk about permanence in different ways and forms, although mental conditions, experiences and knowledge lead to different interpretations, and it is clear that difference in understandings is not identical with the ambiguity and variability of truths. For example, since the appearance of animals on earth, self-defense is the most all-encompassing principle in life, although two scientists or two philosophers may not arrive at identical answers to questions about the nature and essential and accidental peculiarities of life.

17. What is the exact and comprehensive definition of perceptible and intelligible beauty?

18. Does the real person have these two types of beauty (perceptible and intelligible)?

19. What are the causes of different reflections of the self in relation to colors [in individual or synthetic state, due to various combinations]?
20. Is there a direct relationship between abstract beauties to perceive the nature of beauty and man?
21. Is absolute abstraction in beauty and universal concepts and the substance of the view in general on this issue possible?
22. What is the definition of the essence of the numbers such as 2, 7, 100, etc. (apart from their figure, written and oral forms)?
23. What is the real and convincing interpretation of mystical disclosures and inspirations?
24. What is art?
25. Are scientific, technological and artistic discoveries and philosophical and ideological outlooks a kind of phenomenon?
26. To what extent are these phenomena conscious and free?
27. What is genius and what are its types?
28. What is the factor that makes a person remember a forgotten subject or case?
29. What is the definition of the nature of thinking and what are its types? What is the difference between thinking and intellection?
30. What is corporealization (considering an existent as non-existent and a non-existent as existent, and acceptance of it in a given case)?
31. What is intuitive knowledge and the sense of contradiction felt for it (the unity of the perceiver and the perceived object)?
32. Is the rule “The general is bigger than its part” absolute or conditioned by qualitative limits?
33. There are many axiomatic principles, which are essential to observe in all human sciences and branches of knowledge. Are they limited to rational and absolute, or inductive principles?
34. What is the comprehensive definition of pleasure? Do the different types of pleasure, such as the pleasures of food, sleeping, knowledge, victory, and aesthetics constitute a single reality or diverse realities?

35. What is the comprehensive definition of pain? Do the different types of pain, such as physical pain, the sting of ignorance, the bitterness of defeat, and the displeasure of coming in contact with filthy items, constitute a single reality or diverse realities?
36. What is the way of knowing the main reasons for the emergence of civilizations, their exaltation and their fall, through the scientific method?
37. What is the cause of variation in the 164 definitions of culture?
38. What is the criterion of a purposeful and advanced culture?
39. Is it essential to coordinate all the elements of culture? With this assumption, what is the reason behind the incapability of man to coordinate them?
40. What is the reason behind inconsistency of the two great elements of culture, viz. human sciences and technology?
41. What is the ultimate definition of man?
42. Is the knowledge about man, without considering his moral aptitudes and actions, a complete knowledge? The basis for this question is that anyone who knows that man has the aptitude for justice and serving his fellow human beings knows man better than anyone else who has no information about this aptitude.
43. Considering his moral aptitudes and activities, what is the impact of the knowledge about man in his movement for perfection?
44. What is the factor for movement in history? Must this factor be definitely a reality?
45. Is the infinite mental perception a perception about quantity or about quality?
46. Is the infinite mental perception conceptual, actual or real?
47. Which is the easier and more direct way of acquiring the principles and fundamentals of the universe, perceiving its orderliness, or its beauty and splendor?
48. What are the channels and means of the human beings' development from the realm of natural essence to the realm of ideal essence and then to the realm of the essence of perfection?

49. What is the way of solving and reconciling the two views on the world: infinite and finite?¹
50. If our knowledge of the present condition of the universe is sufficient, what is the way of knowing its future condition?
51. What are sudden psychological upheavals and their amazing effects; are they for goodness or for wickedness?
52. What is the interpretation of sublime feeling about sublime duty?
53. What is the way of curbing the mental activities of some individuals which are not supposed to be destructive but supposedly constructive?
54. What is the definition of the phenomena of willpower and freedom and the ways of utilizing them?
55. How can the law of causation be reconciled with the voluntary actions of man?
56. What is the way of freedom from freewill?
57. What is the way of sublimation of the psychological condition of people apart from compulsory, emergent, involuntary, and reactionary actions and, in addition to voluntary actions?
58. What are the definitions and ultimate way of reconciling the phenomena of devotion (ta‘abbud) and intellection (ta‘aqqul)?
59. What is the ultimate way of reconciling the three concepts of power, right and falsehood, placed against one another?
60. We know that man is yet to regard power as justice, and powerful as just! Is there hope that, one day, tyrants will regard justice as power and just as powerful?
61. Will man be able to establish a free relationship with power in all its forms?
62. Does primacy rest upon the individual or society, and what is the way of determining the dimensions of their primacy?

¹ Here, there are two contradictory reasonings: (1) the human mind cannot fathom the potential of the world; therefore, it is infinite; and (2) in view of determining the history of the big bang and the rule of generally following the implementation, on the basis of the limitation of every part which is of this type, it is thus finite.

63. What is the comprehensive definition of “money”? Is it possible to urge using money for good, or what is necessary? Or, will he not be able to ever do this vital task?
64. What is the real value of different types of action, such as physical, mental, or exploratory actions, actions that yield common outcomes, and those whose fruits are sublime?
65. What is the essence of memory and the status of its retentive powers, considering that a sound memory can store one trillion pieces of information?
66. If the pieces of information reflected from the physical forms are restored in the brain’s memory, where are the formless and shapeless pieces of information, such as universal concepts, stored?
67. Has the bond of the body and soul reached its ultimate state, or will it always remain ambiguous?
68. Are the absolute concepts, such as absolute motion and absolute matter, a set of truths, or abstract and mental matters?
69. What is the comprehensive definition of perfection and excellence? It is said that logic never makes mistakes, and accordingly, it is imagined that the error of the scholars is traceable to their mistake in the application and collation of rules; otherwise, the rules by themselves are undoubtable. In the same manner, mathematical facts, according to general opinion, are derived from a set of axiomatic and undeniable propositions! And the same facts are so [seemingly] certain that not only us but even nature must abide by them and the same empirical laws can show us all the unknown aspects of the world... Yet, as the scholars and scientists reflected on, they found out that mere mathematical and empirical rules can never be sufficient to rely on. They said to themselves: “Are these preliminary points and principles sufficient for all we know, or can a puff overhaul these foundations? By relying on these principles and rules, anyone who doubts and denies is very superficial, and since doubt and denial does not require any reasoning, he makes himself glad!”¹
70. To which cause can realism, under the garb of perceptibles, be traced?

¹. ‘Alā Atlāl al-Madhab al-Māddī, vol. 1, pp. 134-135, quoting *Science and Hypothesis* by Jules Henri Poincaré.

71. Excluding religion, from where can the answers to the six questions be obtained?
72. What are the ways of making use of science for the sake of real benefit for all human beings?
73. What is the essence of time? Is it a subjective reality or concrete-objective reality?
74. Do we have a way for humanity to make use of the sublime blessings of realistic modernism and innovation?
75. Is there a way out of the three claws of time (past, present and future)? What is that way?
76. Is time a reality? Does it have types and parts such as physical time, psychological time, cosmic time, etc.?
77. What is the scientific validity of presenting life, soul, existence, and personality as the given properties of the specific system of matter?
78. What is the scientific validity of the proposition that all things consist of a unity?
79. Does the division and breaking up of particles continue ad infinitum? Given the limitation of every particle, how is this division and breaking up possible? If this division or breaking up stops for a moment, for instance in basic particles like electrons, how is it possible for a thing to maintain his physical continuity (even in the smallest possible extent) and not be divisible and separable (anymore)?
80. What is the essence and value of experiment and observation in science?
81. Is the restriction of all channels of looking for the truth in pure science scientific, philosophical, or neither scientific nor philosophical? Is it not pure imagination?
82. What is the essence of science?
83. What is will or will power? How can [physical] actions, which are effects of non-physical will power, be interpreted? What is the boundary between action and will power?
84. Freedom of belief means to have or not to have belief in what or whom, from the perspective of human values?

85. How can nerves transfer external forms to the brain?
86. What is the nature of the phenomena and mental activities?
87. What does this statement, of the famous mathematician Henri Poincaré, mean: “Scientific truth from the perspective of the common observer is far from any sort of doubt and scepticism, and he imagines this element”?
88. Is the relativity of time an intelligible truth?
89. How can realities be divided in this manner: “a thing for itself, a thing for us, and a thing in the affair itself”?
90. What does this statement of Descartes mean: “If a person allows himself to doubt the existence of God, he cannot prove to us even the most axiomatic mathematical statement like $2 + 2 = 4$ ”?
91. With the negation of God and eternal life, how can one explain the human motives for acquisition of virtues, sublime morality, selflessness, and self-sacrifice along the way of human ideals?
92. How can those schools of thought that present themselves as defenders of humanity justify themselves through scientific rules, whereas humanity and its defense, vis-à-vis the notion of the survival of the fittest, is emotional and perceptual?
93. Can humanism be proved vis-à-vis the notion of survival of the fittest?
94. What is the way of reconciling matter and spirit in the logic of science and human life?
95. Is the movement of man and the perpetual development in his life and history evolutionary? Of course, evolution here means conscious free movement and development. Does this evolution follow a straight line?
96. Is the value of four types of freedom, viz. freedom of belief, freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and freedom of action, absolute? Or, does it depend on which proposition, reality or objective it is applied to?
97. Is it proven by science that our knowledge and learning does not encompass a more expansive and meaningful world? We know that a number of scientists and philosophers believe that the world of nature in which we live is encompassed by another world possessing a higher reality

and principles. They are William James¹ and Bertrand Russell, who are most indifferent to metaphysical and supernatural reality.

Max Planck has indicated this point in the books *The Image of the World in Modern Physics*, and *Where is Science Going?* Oswald Kulpe has also agreed with the abovementioned point. Einstein also acknowledges the surprising limitation of physics, particularly in terms of the limitations of the tools of perception.²

98. Is the system of the universe open or close? Does, what is behind the concrete and perceptible, also pertain to the same realities, which we can see in the world of nature.

99. Many of the propositions—especially in social sciences—are considered scientific, whereas their proofs of scientific verification are insufficient, but they are brought forth and defended by some individuals according to certain tastes and goals. What is the way of solving this harmful issue? That is, if we assume that proving a proposition as a scientific proposition with a hundred degrees of discovery and connection with reality requires ten percent or higher to be scientific. In this manner, a kind of uncertainty in the scientific discussion and investigations will be generated, and the egoists take advantage of these situations all the time.

100. Can the claim of scientists about scientific issues be the definite criterion and proof of their validity? The answer of the wary thinkers to this question is negative.

“Science is nothing that can teach us the total system of the universe. It is only a handful of ambiguous identifications. We do not know a considerable number of stars in the cosmos. So, any assumption or opinion we express about the system of the universe is futile and a claim bereft of any proof. The conservative natural philosophers do not accept that their views about the heavenly bodies are nothing but fiction! If natural philosophy is not a belief above the domain of science, then what is it? Does the world of nature [in a sense only] say what it knows and identifies? Or, does it go beyond that? No! Did the chemist identify [all] the components of life? How did he prove the generation of solids? Have the principles of the philosophy of growth

¹. *'Alā Aṭlāl al-Madhab al-Māddī* (*On the Slumbers of the Materialist School*), p. 135, quoting the book *Irādah I'tiqād* (*Willpower - Belief*) by William James.

². Bertrand Russell, *The Concept of Relativity*, p. 194.

and progress been perfected and freed from any kind of turbidity? Has the theory of matter and power reached its ultimate state? Have the scholars arrived at a consensus of opinion on all the subjects of their discussion? Is there still room for debate that the system of the universe is perpetually subject to laws? Yes, it is possible for a scholar to answer these questions but his answers will not exceed beyond the limits of a handful of speculative beliefs which are only preferential in nature. But the natural philosophers are so confident in relying on these unscientific beliefs that it is as if these are everlasting rules, whereas the best and most unwavering scientific law is still doubtful for us, and no one can prove its being essential, just as its falsity cannot also be established! In a nutshell, we must say that natural philosophy is replete with unestablished views which can never be established even in the end.”¹

101. Must the principle that human beings always want to delve into the exterior aspects of things and know their truths, be continued? Or, must they be contented with the same phenomena and peculiarities in view of the fact that seeking for the truth leads to the advancement in science and technology?

102. When some extreme positivists claim that “All religious propositions are meaningless,” have they explained what they mean? When they encounter this proposition: “If there is no eternal life, we must say that life only revolves around the axis of the powerful; none of the sublime values of humanity can be proven; anyone powerful who observes the rights of others and takes a step along the path of human felicity is the most foolish of people!” Do they consider it a meaningless proposition? When religion states: “Along the path of rational life, look for the answer to the lofty objective of life.” Is this a meaningless proposition?! When religion maintains: “The ardent desire to search for perfection which is in you will not be satisfied except by being situated in the Axis of Absolute Perfection.” Is this a meaningless proposition?!

103. Positivism holds, “Only the following are meaningful propositions: (1) empirical propositions which are built upon perceptible data (“Now, there is rain outside the room”); and (2) outward definitions, tautologies and verbal

¹. Andre Carlson (?), *Qawā'id-e Falsafeh-ye Ṭabī'i* (*The Rules of Natural Philosophy*), as quoted in *'Alā At'lāl al-Madhab al-Māddī* (*On the Slumbers of the Materialist School*), pp. 139-140.

contracts (triangular). In view of the fact that universal laws and the immateriality of the soul as indicated by order, and the laws which prove the consciousness of the Supernatural Being as the universal cause, the positivists must answer the question: Why is proving such metaphysical propositions linked to “perceptible matters”?

104. Is there any hope of a time coming when man will find his lost “self” and commence his movement for perfection after knowing his real “self”?

105. Will man be able to find the appropriate subjects and items for physical, mental and emotional endeavors as well as his intelligence, visualization and will power?

106. Will man realize in the near or distant future that he should consciously and freely organize his four types of relationship?

107. Is it not positivism, which makes the weapon of mass destruction a winner, under the pretext that “Respect and honor for human lives is not a meaningful proposition but rather a personal moral understanding”? Did it not make the egoistic and powerful dominate the rest of humanity?

108. If the criteria for science and reality are sensory perceptions and experience, that is, in the words of Barbour,¹ according to the positivists “Only the experimentable propositions and definitions are meaningful,”² then what kind of proposition is the totality of this universal proposition, which is not derived from perceptible and empirical data?

109. Is the question of memory (not determining its place in the brain) which means the possibility of containing a trillion units, resolvable, in view of the fact that the human brain cells do not exceed seventy million?

110. Usually, wherever man is the one involved, there is always the possibility of misuse of the expressions, way of thinking, intellection, freedom, and moral concepts, for man is unlike other creatures that cannot stand against influential factors and neutralise their effects within themselves. Man may commit a crime and resist for years, nay throughout his life, against the factors that may lead to the disclosure of the crime, never

¹. Ian Graeme Barbour (b. 1923): an American scholar on the relationship between science and religion. [Trans.]

². Ian Barbour, *'Ilm wa Dīn (Issues in Science and Religion)*, trans. Khurramshāhī, p. 280.

allowing it to be exposed. Is there a way to prevent this misuse?

111. What is the ultimate solution of “Art for the sake of art, or art for the sake of man’s rational life?” “Science for the sake of science, or science for the sake of man’s rational life?” and in general, every desirable phenomenon or activity which can be taken away from man and become valuable only to its usurper?

112. Can the existence of universal and inalterable laws in science and philosophy make the universe and its processes be needless of God?

113. What is the correct scientific explanation of the transformation of lifeless materials into living creatures?

114. Is the mental abstraction of the sociologist, (in a bid to perceive pure realities) from preconceived ideas and biases, caused by the environment?

115. How does the fusion of knowledge and values occur in scientific knowledge and regulation?

116. What is the convincing interpretation of the principle of action and reaction in the sphere of life, such as injustice, whose repercussion is in the offing for its doer?

117. How can we unify or coordinate religion, science, philosophy, ethics, and mysticism, and if it is impossible, how should we interpret personalities like Ibn Sīnā and Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī who held such ideas in the highest degree possible?

118. Is there a law available to the human being to prevent him from going to extremes? What is that law?

119. How can we harmonize order in social life with the granting of freedom, the ardent desire for which overflows from within, and suppression of which makes man consider himself as part of a lifeless machine?

120. What is the way of arousing the conscience and keeping it awake?

121. Is it possible to stir one’s will power to put sublime human virtues into action?

122. We all know that all the eminent prophets, religious leaders, righteous rulers and upright moral figures have a consensus of opinion that man’s love toward his fellows is beyond necessary transactions. Yet, what usually happens is, that out of necessity, a person gets closer to another person, and

due to personal interests, he separates from him! Is there a way of applying this lofty principle?

123. What is meant by the philosophy of history other than the overall stimulating agent of history? Is there a way of initiating any change to it?

124. Is it possible to determine the rational limits of profiteering, pleasure-seeking and domineering?

125. In what way do we falsify the harmful notion that, human virtues and values are only meant for organizing social life, and they have no real essence?!

126. Is the classification of philosophy according to (1) the difference in periods (for example, Greek, Middle Ages and contemporary philosophy), (2) schools of thought, and (3) regions/continents a superficial or realistic classification?

127. Awareness is the most desirable state of the human mind such that a great figure like Mawlānā (Rūmī) says, “Whoever is more aware has a strong spirit” while unconsciousness is tantamount to lifeless living! Be that as it may, what is man’s illness that in most cases, he wants to escape from awareness? It is as if awareness is his enemy, and in the words of Mawlānā,

جمله عالم زاختیار و هشت خود
می‌گریزد در سر سر مست خود

All the (people in the) world are fleeing from their free-will and [self]-existence to their drunken (unconscious) side.¹

می‌گریزند از خودی در بیخودی
یا به مستی، یا به شغل، ای مُهتدی

They are fleeing from selfhood into self-lessness either by means of intoxication or by means of (some engrossing) occupation, O well-conducted man.²

تا دمی از هوشیاری وارهند
ننگ خمر و ننگ بر خود می‌نهد

In order that, for a while, they may be delivered from sobriety (consciousness), they lay upon themselves the shame of wine and minstrelsy.³

¹. *The Mathnawī of Jalālu 'ddīn Rūmī*, Book 6, line 224, p. 29. [Trans.]

². *Ibid.*, line 227, p. 29. [Trans.]

³. *Ibid.*, line 225, p. 29. [Trans.]

Elsewhere, he says,

چون سر و ماهیت جان مخبر است هر که او آگاه تر با جان تر است

Since consciousness is the inmost nature and essence of the soul, the more aware one is the more spiritual he is.¹

اقضای جان چون ای دل آگهی است هر که آگه تر بود جانش قوی است

The demand of the soul, as of the heart, is consciousness. Whoever is more conscious, his soul is stronger.

روح را تأثیر آگاهی بود

Awareness is the effect of the spirit; whoever has this in excess is a man of God²

چون جهان جان سراسر آگهی است هر که بیجان است ازدانش تهی است

As the world of the soul is entirely conscious, whoever is lifeless is devoid of knowledge.

In our era, which is so-called the era of science and technology, this unconsciousness has reached an astounding proportion, so much so, that if the various means of amusement are removed from human life, man will put an end to his life. Should something be done about it or not? What is it?

128. Will the day come when love and affection, which enliven the human spirit, re-enter the arena of human life and these stupefied unconscious creatures come to life again?

129. If alienation from the self and others is contrary to the law of human existence, then what is the way of proving the necessity for self-knowing and self-building?

130. We know that an overwhelming majority of people, due to incapability to curb egoism, live with “a virtual self”. For this reason, whenever man is given consciousness, he treats his existence as devoid of the “real self”. Shall we take a step to deliver man from life with “a virtual self”? Or, shall we leave him to himself to plunge into alienation from his self and others?!

131. In order to prevent power-worship, which may exist in everyone, can

¹ *Ibid.*, line 149, p. 19. [Trans.]

² *Ibid.*, line 150, p. 19. [Trans.]

one think of a way not to formally recognize the life of anybody except that which is subservient to his will power? What is this way?

132. Can one prove through scientific laws the correctness of a policy, which the human beings have adopted for administering their social lives?

133. What is the real definition of democracy?

134. Has man been able so far to establish logical democracy in society? Or, since its real meaning is based upon the fictitious notion of "might is right," can democracy be implemented in its perfect form?

135. If man makes use of all the opportunities, mental or psychological powers, material and spiritual advantages, which he had lost due to selfishness and self-centeredness along the path of curbing egoism, where will he reach in his journey to perfection? Should we not seriously think about this issue, and what the outcome will be if we do?

136. Mistake and error in assessing and understanding personalities by usually exaggerating about them deprive the people from truly benefiting from those personalities.

137. One of the plagues that corrupt human science and learning is derived from narrow-mindedness in exaggerating the value of a subject about which a researcher conducted a study and acquired valuable information. For example, let us consider the use of power in human history. There are historians who witness the serious impact of power in its common meaning, looking at the effect of power in outward defeats and victories, thus concluding that power is everything! If they consider the meaning of power as control over oneself par excellence, and that every injustice has a repercussion, which will be experienced, sooner or later, by its perpetrator, and that primary power in the absolute sense is the destroyer of power itself, they will not be convinced of the subject of their studies.

138. Most people have not yet gone above the level of "I as the end, and others as means," nor taken a step toward the higher level of "everybody as the end, or, all as means for a lofty human goal". They do not even want to understand the two dimensions of man (as both the means and end) and harmonize their lives according to this principle! Given this, what must be done?

139. Will man recognize any limit in destroying his life for the sake of dominating others "in the name of technological advancement"? Or, will he

even resort to mass murder?

140. Will man be able to solve the enigma behind the man-woman relationship, and rescue himself through his legitimate means from the sufferings and undesirable things caused by this enigma?

141. How can man's rivalry with others, and his inability to manage himself, be avoided?

142. We know that the method of analysis in social sciences undermines man's unity of life and soul. It is for this reason that we have been deprived of a real subject in social sciences. Now, what must be done so that social scientists would not be negligent of the unity of man's life and soul?

143. Usually, the dispositions that human beings acquire and with which they live make man negligent of his human identity. What can we do to uproot dispositions (such as judicial, political, artistic, and other dispositions) that prevent man from living with his human identity? Can one find a way that, while having one of these, man will not abandon his pure conscience and nature which constitute his original identity?

144. What is the impact of each of the hereditary factors, natural environment, social milieu, sudden psychological disturbances, and other deterministic factors upon the destiny of man?

145. The implication of this question is this: Can the quality and quantity of the impact of the said factors be determined? If the said factors impact human life, then how can activities related, training, education, and sudden psychological disturbances be interpreted?

146. Usually man's shameful incapability to find the truth due to wrongly thinking that the truth is antiquated with the passage of time, and, imagining that time is like termites that tear apart and consume any edible material; that is, time devours the truth, and, on the contrary, anything that appears today or tomorrow is an undeniable truth! What must be done to rescue him in the actual domain of truths, which are vaster than the fictitious claws of time?

147. In social sciences, have the thinkers realized the truth that since the time when human beings have been deprived of faith that gives meaning to their lives or carelessly rejected it on account of present truths, they are always living in unknown tomorrows?!

My life became some of my tomorrows / Woe to this nowhere tomorrow of mine!

148. Has the dominance of machine over man reached a point when there is still hope to return human beings to their real identity, possessing sublime intellection, emotions and feelings? Or, is this hope totally lost and one must get ready to witness the total extinction of human identity? Since this hope is attached to the very firm roots in the soul, instead of effacing it, should one not make use of it in both arenas of theory and practice?

149. What is the effective and beneficial way of combating agitation and anxiety for the future, which is introduced as the illness of the 20th century?

150. What is the reason why the desire for worldviews, universal, philosophical and systematic insights, and pertinent realities has alarmingly decreased, and the views expressed are only sparks and fragmented propositions (though interesting sometimes)?

151. Will the day come when the individuals, who recognize themselves as deserving to administer human societies, and make promises to the people in a bid to occupy those posts, will fulfill those promises after taking charge of those posts?

152. What is the cause of inability of managements in realizing the reformatory programs and appropriate laws in constitutional laws, diverse rights, and ideal sociopolitical principles? With utmost clarity, Whitehead says, "Human nature is so complex and intricate that for the rulers, all the fixed and written reformatory programs are more insignificant than even the scratched and draft papers on the table for putting those programs into action."

153. How can we comprehend and state the relativities and absolutes with limited and unlimited degrees?

154. Which are the constant and which are the variable? How can we determine their relationship with one another?

155. One of the most important intellectual issues is that the scientific movement, which needs to know both the analytical and synthetic methods, especially in the more general sciences, is defective.

156. Is there a way for nurturing sublime feelings for perceiving beauties, witnessing lofty truths and human emotions?

157. Are we certain that the realities of the universe as far as we know today can only be known through the scientific method and no other way?

158. Do the defenders of a mere natural life deny a life higher than “food, sleep, anger, and desire?” Should we abandon our children to be torn into pieces by the desires of the strong and merciless agents of nature, and not savor the taste of knowledge, the goal of life, faith to value, and particularly, the taste of rational freedom? Will the outcome of our work be only to train our children to satiate the desires for power of the egoists?!

159. Are we certain that the disorders in the lives of people, suicides caused by ignorance, indigence, and curable mental disorders do not affect the lives of indifferent and powerful people?! Do you think one can find on earth the most powerful individual who will not be stupefied, cannot get weak and will one day consciously live in real happiness?

160. Is there a way for the leaders of societies to prepare the ground for the lives of people with all the potential they have? Can one just sit idly and witness the passing away of constructive institutions for human perfection and allow behavior to ignore hundreds of truths and realities of the human life, mind and soul, and pretend, like Sartre, that man has history but no institution?!

161. Can we accept the ludicrous notion, that the life of today’s man, lost in the midst of limited pieces of information, baseless wants, anxiety, alienation from the self and others, is molded by the excellent personalities of the past—such as Socrates, Aristotle and Plato in the West and Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Ibn Khaldūn, Ibn Haytham (Alhazen),¹ Abū Ma‘shar,² Mawlawī (Rūmī), Mīr Dāmād, and Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn in the East?!

162. Have the principles and laws of pure natural life been able to determine the bounds of forbidden territories for human souls?

¹. Abū ‘Alī al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn al-Haytham, known as Ibn al-Haytham, Alhacen or Alhazen (965 – c. 1040): a Muslim scientist and polymath who made significant contributions to the principles of optics, as well as to physics, astronomy, mathematics, ophthalmology, philosophy, visual perception, and to the scientific method. [Trans.]

². Abū Ma‘shar, Ja‘far ibn Muḥammad al-Balkhī, also known as al-Falakī or Ibn Balkhi (787 – 886 CE): a Persian astrologer, astronomer, and Islamic philosopher, thought to be the greatest astrologer of the Abbasid court in Baghdad. [Trans.]

163. Can one conceive of a universal code of law and a global culture without globalizing the powers and virtues of life?!

164. The foundation of universal human rights as well as that of universal morality consists of the innate honor, dignity and nobility of man. By official teachings in universities in the world, of proving the principle of natural selection and survival of the fittest), formally or informally accepting the [Hobbesian] notion of “man is the wolf of another man”, and affirming the Machiavellian principle of “the end justifies the means”, can one put forth a foundation of universal human rights and morality?! Why has no step been taken to remove this contradiction?

165. In order to escape from the absolute, which is denied by a group of skeptics due to their failure to comprehend it, shall we not be entangled with infinite absolutism? For instance, is the one, who wants to deny God and eternal life, not compelled to regard as absolute all the propositions used to deny the comprehension of the absolute? In the words of Hugo,¹ “instead of a Universal Will, he has to establish an absolute will for every existent, and in doing so, he thinks that he has staged an upheaval in human thought!”

166. Is there any hope of a day when the powerful egoists would not dominate others by shedding the blood of the innocent, annihilating the weak and helpless; and instead, fill the stomach of the hungry, cover the naked, and educate the people, who are burning in silence due to their lack of knowledge as their means of attaining supremacy?! Is this aspiration of the pure-hearted individuals for a day when the world leaders, instead of employing force in its deceitful forms to dominate people, would take ruling over the people’s hearts as their motto, by respecting them and organizing their “rational life”, and treat them with utmost reassurance under their management?

167. A thousandth of all those physical and mental powers which man has utilized to ward off the opposition of his fellow human beings has not been used in the way of preventing calamities and afflictions of natural factors. This means that the shameful massacre of people by their fellow human beings for personal interests cannot be compared with his difficulty or nature, and this comparison will never happen. In view of this, may we

¹. Victor-Marie Hugo (1802 – 1885) a French poet, playwright, novelist, essayist, visual artist, statesman, human rights activist and exponent of the Romantic movement in France. [Trans.]

request those who allegedly advocate human perfection to define perfection for us?

168. There is no doubt that lying, pretension and deception are against reality—regardless of their desirable or undesirable effects. This is because an unrealistic expression of a piece of information contrary to the reality tarnishes a personality in the same degree of its opposition to reality, for the human being is a reality that takes the truth, and not falsehood, as the means of his task. If due to impotence, a person has no natural strength to resist his own immorality, then his conscience is put into the spotlight, and it cannot regard seven as zero, and zero as seven, unless all elements of perfection in his innermost being are ruined. However, political science, which teaches the most basic element of order and perfection of individual and collective rational life of human beings, is plunged in lie, pretension and deception. O Machiavellians! Are you certain that you have no historical and moral responsibility whatsoever? If you are certain, where have you acquired this certainty? Announce it to the people. Let them be convinced and change their opinion concerning you.

169. We all know that among the feelings of people, a penchant and intuition for beauty has specific desirability. In the course of time, does this intuition evolve within human beings? Or, following the fading away of life's vibrance, it diminishes as well? Present some beautiful items to the youth of this generation and then present the same items to the adults. (Of course, with the assumption that these two groups are psychologically sound.) Then ask these two groups about the effect of those beautiful items on them and about their peculiarities. Will you see a small degree of improvement in the answers of the youth regarding their perception of beauty? Or, on the contrary, on account of being intellectually mature, will you get very profound, pleasant and refreshing answers from the adults? Why?

170. How can one scientifically prove the greatness and value of personality to the powerful egoists, and say, "Do not breach contracts by relying on fictitious and momentary power, because your personality hinges on your commitment"?

171. Are the criteria of the realities of life the essential and legal truths, which God has manifested through the nature, principles and rules governing it? Or, is the criterion of the realities this slogan "Since I like it, therefore it is the truth"? Through which scientific or philosophical method should we

prove that the criteria of the realities are essential and legal truths, and not the slogan "I want it without any condition or restriction"?

172. We know that man's ability to adjust and adapt is of immense importance, for it is through this ability that, in the words of some thinkers, within 24 hours a just person can turn into an oppressor and an oppressor into a just person. Is there a way to educate and train people to utilize this ability along the path of goodness and perfection, or none? The necessity for employing this ability will become clear when, due to the lack of correct training in most cases, the ability to be resilient in deprivations is utilized.

173. Do you know of a way to decrease the people's satisfaction (without any reason and cause) and to increase their rational satisfaction and acceptance? In most cases, man lives with acceptance without any investigation and strives to attain the elements of his acquiescence. It is clear that blind acquiescence knows no condition. For example, man accepted slavery because freedom had not even entered his mind.

174. Has noble acquiescence which leads to individual and collective progress, been examined so far?

175. Is there a way to organize a group for the collection of common views and beliefs of prominent personalities of human society in a bid to reform their material and spiritual condition and to turn into constructive competitions the conflicts that undermine those beliefs and views? There is definitely such a way, provided that this group is immune from the hands of Machiavellians who advocate the slogan "The end justifies the means in the world of politics", and the circles, that open the horizon of the universe (in an open system) for the experts in science, philosophy and worldview, be founded vis-à-vis the Vienna Circle.¹

176. Will the endeavor to prove that modern human religion (humanism)—if ever it is worthy to be followed in all aspects—is half way to yield any result? Granted that this school can respond to man's relationship with his fellow human beings, can it also provide convincing answers to the other four questions? (Who am I? Where have I come from? What have I come for? Where am I heading?)

¹. Vienna Circle: is a group of early twentieth-century radically anti-metaphysical philosophers who sought to reconceptualize empiricism by means of their interpretation of recent advances in the physical and formal sciences. [Trans.]

177. For the salvation of humanity, will the global leaders take the major step of proving that the primary doubts caused by ignorance are different from the constructive doubt and sublime perplexity, which is attained at very high levels of knowledge and gnosis, by adherents of the path of truth?

178. Can sociology be promoted beyond the physical studies of societal phenomena, which are usually effects and draw the attention of the thinkers (sociologists) toward the causes of those phenomena? Does actiology also have rules of its own? What are those rules?

179. In this period of history, can we predict the future condition of mankind so that, if it is full of hope, we could welcome it, and if it is discouraging on account of disobedience, carnal desires and loss of values, we would not be hopeful?

180. Is it necessary for a renewed and comprehensive examination of the identity and value of the schools of thought and ideologies that deal with the human being?

181. Is there a way or ways to enhance the social sciences and to rescue them from inertia and degradation? What is that way?

182. Why don't the scholars and thinkers reexamine their writings and works in order to remove contradictions?! For example, given Freud's strong insistence on the primacy of sexual instinct and the need to satisfy it, are they aware that later on Freud said, "Satisfying the carnal desires without restriction leads to the weakening of the intellect"?!

What answer will he give to his conscience who says, "I am upset by presenting inestimable questions and I acknowledge this discomfort"¹! Which psychological ailment does he, who used to suffer from mental complexes and ailing allergy for spiritual issues, want to cure?

183. Has the authority of the intellect been proved? That the authority of the intellect should not be questioned is not correct, because all these conflicting beliefs and schools of thought that have emerged claim to be rooted in the intellect, dividing the people into hostile groups. If the intellect's authority were founded on reality, all these ideological conflicts and struggles would not have existed.

184. Do we have methods of identifying ignorance?

¹. Edgar Pesch, *Andishehhā-ye Freud (Pensee de Freud)*, p. 93.

185. Can one acquire information about all the elements of ignorance?
186. Without doubt, great personalities—given their diversity—have been very influential in discovering and stating the ways to man's material and spiritual felicity. We know, however, that for the same reason, prominent figures have been the support of people. Has there been so far a convincing criterion for benefiting from these personalities so that it could be sincerely introduced to the people, thereby preventing its misuse?
187. In the field of physics, up to where will the division of particles continue? Is it possible for it to continue ad infinitum? Granted that all of them are limited and finite, how is it possible for them to be infinite? And if this division is suspended at a given time, will it later exist in the concrete realm of physics? Therefore, this division must not be suspended and if it does not exist later, how will an existent be extinguished?
188. Has the truth of mystical unraveling, inspiration and intuition been lucidly defined so far?
189. Have the conditions of the abovementioned phenomena been accurately identified so far?
190. Which is more valuable in scientific methods, reliance on axiomatic principles or reliance on essential propositions? Or, is the source of the need to rely on the axiomatic principles identical with their essential correctness?
191. Is the definition of value and its types completely specified?
192. In formulating an intellectual system, can one sacrifice the truths for the sake of perfecting the system, which has been supported and defended by thinkers? For instance, in order to prove that the foundations of the different aspects of human life are sexual desires, economic inclinations or political activities, can one overlook the fundamental role of racism, culturalism, movements based upon power and religion, an endeavor in the way of preserving human values? That is, shall we leave man in the midst of the diverse thinkers and fragmented pieces of knowledge to continue his scientific and philosophical life? Or, shall we say that it is essential to strive hard in order to formulate an intellectual system? Ultimately, it is not a closed system but an open one. In this case, one will not be able to conceive a school of thought which can determine man's duty in relation to the four types of relationship without kindling the fire of zeal in the human beings, with sound mind, to comprehend all aspects of the abovementioned

relations.

193. Has atheism presented a proof to prove itself, or not? The reply is that the life which is not God-based is the life in the jungle, where the predator is egoism with its two basic pillars (profiteering and avoidance of loss), without the chain of order and law. On the contrary, all the solid proofs available on the existence of God, the Exalted, in addition to the axiomatic dictates of nature guide towards collective peace. How can we afford to discard all these proofs and then in lieu of God, point to a universal reality like absolute matter, which is much in need of abstraction and not God?!

194. Is secularism based upon scientific proofs, or is it a way of making the people indifferent toward serious principles of life? In order to justify secularism, political philosophers have dissected the human soul (as internal and external dimensions) and named it “science”!

195. Can secularism be responsive to all the diverse and conflicting desires of the majority of people in society, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of people are seriously inclined to religious life, if superficial obstacles, particularly the stupefying media propaganda, are removed along their way?

196. We know that since the time of Jean Baptiste Lamarck and Charles Darwin, this theory, which is anchored in empirical observations and comparative analogies, has entered the domain of science, holding that in the evolutionary process, some of the monkeys ended up as “homo sapiens”. Much hullabaloo has been made to establish that this theory is scientific, to the point of manipulating political schools of thought. Some scientists with a weak voice questioned the bases of the said theory, being a scientific issue. Yet, the appalling presence of free thinking and modernism manipulated by the opportunists and the fear of being stigmatized as reactionary and retrogressive, pervaded the scientific circle and one dared to open his mouth and criticize the bases of the said theory. Let us consider this point: “It seemed that in the coming years, science will be able to explain, elucidate and expose to the public the issue of evolution in terms of its mechanism and manner.”

Alas! After the death of Haeckel, science instilled these displaced hopes and extensive ideas, and as Dr. Singer¹ observes,

¹. Charles Joseph Singer (1876 - 1960): a British historian of science, technology,

Nowadays, the works of the great prophet, Darwin, in Germany, are located in parts of the libraries to which people rarely go if ever the issue of evolution has still maintained its power and influence. On the contrary, the law of Yana, about the evolution of the fetus has lost its value, and it is only in recent years that scientists were able to form a set of real lineage for man.

Different chains of our connection between man and animal were gradually lost and their being fake exposed. The carved fossils and stones found in Spy, Belgium in 1886, Britain in 1887, Java (Indonesia) in 1890, Germany in 1907, France in 1908, and China in 1929, clearly show us that the present European race is of a breed of individuals who had high intelligence and many skills, and in terms of physique, did not differ much from us. These individuals are known as Cro-magnon humans. Prior to them the representative humans were individuals whose fossils were those of Neanderthal and discovered in La Chapelle-aux-Saints (France). Marcellin Boule (1861-1942), the head of human paleontology institute in Paris, published his complete descriptions of them in 1911. Prior to them were the Heidelberg humans (*Homo heidelbergensis*) and only their jaws were found in Mauer (Germany) and it is the oldest acquired relic of the real human ever available. Concerning the eras prior to it, for a long period there was no information ever obtained. Some were thinking that the bones discovered in 1890 by Eugène Dubois¹ in Java belong to the Pithecanthropus; that is, a specific being that is “a species in between humans and apes”. However, as Boule mentioned in the 1923 edition of his *Fossil Men*, no definite view was expressed in this regard. From 1929 onward, the Chinese scientist Pei Wenzhong, the American scientist Davidson Black (b. 1884), and Franz Weidenreich discovered near the city of Beijing a group of fossil specimens with close similarity with Pithecanthropus and named *Sinanthropus*. Many years after the said research studies, Boule revealed that both of them were beings of our height between the ape-like humans and humans of our period. Nowadays, it cannot be explicitly expressed whether man

and medicine. [Trans.]

¹. Marie Eugène François Thomas Dubois (1858 – 1940): a Dutch paleoanthropologist who earned worldwide fame for his discovery of *Pithecanthropus erectus* (later redesignated *Homo erectus*), or ‘Java Man’. [Trans.]

descended from apes or not. Some pieces of information which seem correct to some extent show that we have common ancestry with human-like apes.¹

In another place, Pierre Rousseau says about the emergence of technology and the appearance of man:

The emergence of technology and appearance of man are perhaps a repetition of this worthless subject; this great happening, which has definite importance in the history of planet earth, will always remain covered with mystery in thick fog and perhaps its nature will never be known to us. We know very well that most paleontologists related it to at least one million years ago; that is, to the fourth geological epoch. The newest discoveries in the paleontology of the human race, instead of clarifying to us the history of this subject, make it known that the human origins are so complex and ambiguous and this ambiguity has so far increased.

New discoveries, instead of simple and one-dimensional progress as imagined in the past, show numerous and multifaceted branches that had more or less come into being and existed for a while and faded away, and only a set of them survived and initially led up to *Homo sapiens* or the rational man and precursor of today's human being. Prior to this, paleontology maintained that today's human being is from the species of ape-like humans or *pithecanthropus* that came into being as a result of evolution of the Neanderthal man and then the Cro-Magnon man. Today, after vast and numerous discoveries in Europe, Asia and Africa, it has become clear that the obtained fossils do not belong to a specifically single species but rather to at least four different species, and our ancestor, that is, in reality, the ancestor of the 'rational' Cro-Magnon man is not the Neanderthal or Heidelberg man. And, we are neither from the predecessors of ape-like *pithecanthropus* humans nor from *sinanthropus* up to the genus prior to the 'rational man', whose fossils are absolutely unknown and unidentifiable.²

¹. *Tārikh-e 'Ulūm (History of Science)*, trans. Hasan Şaffārī, pp. 650-651.

². Pierre Rousseau, *Tārikh-e Ṣanāye' wa Ikhtirā'āt (Histoire des techniques et des inventions)*, trans. Hasan Şaffārī, pp. 19-20.

197. Is there a way of making the celestial goals and spiritual values of arts scientific? If ever there is, how can we benefit from it?

198. There was a time when the “three stages” [theory] advanced by Auguste Comte, in a bid to interpret and explain the human account in relation to knowing the universe, had been accepted by some authorities. After the passage of time and the emergence of realities contrary to Comte’s theory, was this theory or belief set aside, or not? These three stages are as follows:

(1) The Theological stage: In this stage, which is the oldest period, man would attribute whatever he would see in nature to the supernatural, such as the genie, spirits, and gods.

(2) The Philosophical stage: In this stage, man had advanced in knowledge to some extent and looked at the world from a philosophical perspective. The blossoming of philosophy in Greece and during the Middle Ages, just prior to the Renaissance, belongs to this stage.

(3) The Pure Science stage: In this stage, on account of astounding advancements, man established contact with the objective realities through observation and experiment, and it can be said that this period started from the Renaissance onward.

Through a brief examination, the flaw and baselessness of Auguste Comte’s theory can be revealed.¹

¹. “Eight points of criticism to Auguste Comte’s three stages theory:

(1) From one perspective, the first period of man’s contact with the external world cannot be theological because the shift from the perceptible phenomena of nature to a level above those phenomena requires the faculty of mental abstraction which, according to the theory of evolution—of which Compte’s theory is a derivative—is supposed to take place in the subsequent periods. And if we think that in that period man had been capable of turning a natural effect into a natural cause, it follows that man had comprehended the law of causation at that time, and this in itself proves that even during that time, man had a philosophical perspective of the world.

(2) There is strong possibility that the case has been exactly the opposite. That is, on account of the primitiveness of man’s worldview, the people during that period had more physical outlook because shift from one effect to a cause of the same type seems simpler and easier.

(3) Granted that due to the lack of directly observing the causes, the people during that period would search for those causes behind the phenomena of the concrete world, this does not mean that they would consider the causes behind the

phenomena as divine truths. That man regards phenomena in the physical world as metaphysical symbols is a common happening, which is prevalent even today.

(4) During that Theological period alleged by Comte, we know of schools of philosophy in the Indian subcontinent which are described as follows:

The emergence of philosophy of India: since there was not much attention given to history in ancient time, whatever shall be stated about the antiquity of Vedas and the history of Indian literature and philosophy is based upon speculation and estimation. What is obvious, however, is that philosophical ideas and moral goals appeared during the period of Upanishads and without establishing logical connection for a long time, they had remained in the same original state until gradually expanding and developing and forming the foundations, channels or principles of intellectual schools. The foundations, channels and principles of the philosophical schools of India are not a product of specific individuals' ideas, but rather a product of the ideas of numerous individuals who lived in different centuries in various vast cities and districts of this subcontinent.

After the formulation of different beliefs and ideas, some individuals engaged in learning, teaching and propagating the philosophical foundations while other individuals opposed the same, and there arose between these two groups disputes and debates as a result of which, the beliefs of each group have been polished.

Initially, philosophical ideas were transmitted orally from one person to another but have codified after sometime and remained from period to period. The pioneer scholars of India would present a subject in their gatherings and class sessions, establishing its validity or invalidity through criticism, argumentation and exposition. These discourses have been recorded with brief expressions called *sutra*, which are more akin to pithy aphorisms, allegories and allusions.

Philosophical schools: Philosophy in Sanskrit language is called *Darsana*. Most of the schools of philosophy that believe in the existence of God have maintained that through illumination the trained individual reaches *Brahman* (the Absolute Essence). The intellectual foundations of most of the philosophical schools of India are based upon the teachings of Buddha and Indo-chinese religions but they are beholden to this exceptional rule." See *Upanishad*, Sanskrit text as translated by Shāhzādeh Muḥammad Dārī Shukūh, son of Shāh Jahān, with the introduction, marginal notes, glossary and edited by Dr. Tirāchand and Mr. Jalālī Nā'inī, pp. 51-52.

Then the author adds his points of criticism to Comte's theory thus:

(5) Then we reach the Philosophical period, which according to Comte's theory constitutes the second stage. Regardless of the beginning of this period, it includes the period of flourishing of philosophy in Greece, Alexandria and the Middle Ages and in that very period, very important scientific figures among whom were Archimedes (circa 287-212 BCE), Euclid (323-283 BCE), physicians and even artists who were engaged in their activities with scientific affirmations of their arts.

(6) Before generalizing his theory, how we wish Comte had visited the East and

199. “Our account began with the question ‘What is the tiniest particle of matter?’ and ‘Can we divide matter into its tiniest part?’ and ended up with the discovery of the powerful atom consisting of orbital electrons and constituting the entire universe. The powerful atom, which is a great repository of energy and sometimes shakes in the boundless outerspace, producing waves in ether—exactly like waves in the pool before our eyes producing electrons and protons, and the waves of unknown ether are the materials that constitute the world. Today, what mankind knows, has not yet exceeded the least degree of knowing things. Great peaks in the territory of science still remained undiscovered. There are still dangerous paths ahead. Other planets are yet to be conquered. There are the works of those who want to enter the world of science and search for the ways of discovering the truth. This book only points out the adventure before us.”¹

John Langdon-Davies writes, “The physics of the power of its theoretical and scientific methods takes us closer to a single reality. This reality is very distant from the limits and boundaries of things perceptible. Once again, we recognize the greatness of the reality, which it is impossible to attain. These perceptions underpin the further perfection of scientific thinking (whose sequence cannot be severed and whose subsistence is perpetual).”²

Neils Bohr says, “Notwithstanding the incalculability of mysteries, basically such a question shall be posed in every stage of development of science, for every kind of scientific explanation is essentially to deduce a set of complex realities into another simpler set.”³ He also says, “We endeavor here to show

seen for himself how the Muslim societies, from the latter part of the second century up to the initial part of the sixth century, were engaged in their scientific activities through observations and experiments. It was already sufficient achievement that the Muslims rescued science from pure abstractionism by relying on observations and experiments during those centuries [which in the classification of Comte belonged to the Middle Ages and the Philosophical stage].

(7) Comte is supposed to be asked, “On which basis can you prove that the number of philosophers after the era of movement in Europe up to our era (latter part of the 20th century) is lesser than the number of European philosophers during the Middle East? Can all these books and encyclopedias which reflect the ideas of European philosophers after the Renaissance period be ignored?!”

¹. Langdon-Davies, *Shigift-hā-ye Durūn-e Atom* (*Marvels inside the Atom*), p. 168.

². Langdon-Davies, *Fizik-e Nū: Tahawwul wa Wāzhegūnī dar Fizik wa Falsafeh* (*Modern Physics: Change and Extinction in Physics and Philosophy*), p. 17.

³. Neils Bohr, *Fizik-e Atomī wa Shinākht-e Basharī: Nūr wa Hayāt* (*Atomic Physics*

the point that the efforts of the physicists are not in a bid to control this unparalleled situation by adopting the roughly intuitive stance of the biologists vis-à-vis the aspects of life. Now, let me point out that only because of this nominal observation that light, which is perhaps the simplest physical phenomenon, shows similarity to life whose analysis goes beyond the framework of the possibilities of scientific analysis.”¹

[Elsewhere, Neils Bohr also says,]

“But in facing this problem, the conditions of research in biology and physics cannot directly be compared with one another because the need for survival of the creature under study exerts limitations on the research in biology—limitations whose similarity cannot be found in physics. For example, if we want to study the parts of an animal in order to determine the role of individuals in the vital functions of the animal, undoubtedly we have to slaughter that animal. It can be concluded here that any experiment done on living specimens is coupled with the lack of finality in terms of the conditions set on the living specimens under study. This matter prompts us to think that we forcefully give some freedom to the living specimens as much as is sufficient for them to disclose to us their ultimate secrets. From this perspective, the existence of life must be considered as a fundamental truth for which no amount of proof can be presented.”²

Oppenheimer says, “It can be assessed that real humans have always disrupted the efforts of physicists. Such things do not exist [in observation], and it is only by discovering them that physics can have access to its ultimate truth and reality, and can even go beyond that and believe that these pieces of wisdom relinquish the knowledge of other things including the science of physics itself.”³

“It is needless to say that most of the scientific advancements that took place in the 18th and 19th centuries soon complicated and set hurdles along the conflicting area between the giant-like machine and deep pit in the mind of the searcher, who had studied them and analyzed their characteristics. Such

and Human Knowledge: Light and Life), p. 17.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³ Julius Robert Oppenheimer, ‘Ilm wa Farzānigī (Science and the Common Understanding), trans. Ahmad ārām, pp. 128-131.

is the situation in the process of great statistical advancement which at the end of the day brought forth human ignorance as an explicit element in appraising the behavior of physical forces.”

1. The power produced by science is a limited light in the midst of the unending darkness of human life and the world. Let us pay attention to the words of Oppenheimer, who presented for the first time the destructive power of the atom, practically for the extinction of the human race:

“We know that our work in reality is a means and a goal. It is a great discovery and an artistic work. With a firm and unflinching faith, we are aware that science in itself is good as well as a tool for replacements. It is a tool for branches of science, scientific arts and human affairs for researches and profound studies. It is for us as scientists and people. In the said unit, we are tools as well as the goal; inventors as well as professors; we are players as well as spectators. There is enhancement of skill. It is a word that has become so worthless. But, today, we anxiously witness that the power to execute changes does not necessarily bring about prosperity. Gradually, the new instruments of destruction and inciting collective fear become the means of increasing ferocity in an all-out war. One of the specific goals and issues of our time is harmonizing the eternal abode, improving the human condition, and uprooting hunger, poverty and misery with restraining violence, lessening resort to institutionalized cruelty among nations. Destroying the human soul in the most dexterous way possible through the police force which, if not more dreadful than the pillages against nature, it is more dexterous than them. It is one of the powers, which would have been, if not used at all. With this logical and just thinking, we say that society’s support for science is mostly to enhance the power derived from science. If ever we want to utilize the power derived this way with wisdom and love for humanity, then approximately all other people also think the way we do. And we also know up to what extent the scientist can be aware of his expertise other than science, and of course, he would not gain from acquiring it. Therefore, unity has both potential and actual state. And the terms of unity are things which, if put closer to one another, can lead one another to luminosity, and not collectively, generally, or consecutively.”¹

¹. Oppenheimer means that realities at the time of being situated side by side and benefiting from each of them for oneself and not as an organized group or individuals dealing with a general truth. Also, it is not such that some of these

“Even in science, and without entering into a foundation called atomic theory, all things are interrelated, thus calling to mind the complimentary features of our existence, particularly our professional life. Without the works of our predecessors, masters and contemporaries, we are nothing. Even when relying on our capability, talent and skill, we can have new understanding and system, we are still nothing in the absence of others, and with their existence, we become more than that. In our relations with the group in general, there is a similar duplicity and the reason for this is our work with one thousand meanings. It is a pleasure for those who continue it. It is training for those who perhaps need it. Yet, from another broader perspective, there is a common power and that is the materialization of something, which is impossible without science. It can be curing of an illness, relieving of pain and suffering, alleviating the inconvenience of the people, further expansion of the bounds of experiment and relations, and teaching in simpler language. We understand and hope that others would also understand that from this perspective, there is a similarity between science, which means specific universal pieces of information, whose goal is to discover, and human society. Like other people with less clarity, we enter into the vast and boundless darkness of the human life and the world. For us as well as for them, change and perpetuity of stability, expertise and generalization, tool and ultimate goal, and the society and individual, that are complimentary, desire our commitment and freedom.”¹

The Effect of Preconceived Principles in Scientific Conclusions

It is true that, in view of the personal influence of the thinker, abstraction of ideas, from premeditated propositions and a priori perceptions, is possible. But, it must be borne in mind that the power that can withstand the influence of premeditated propositions and perceptions, or ignore or totally uproot them after being inculcated in the mind can only be found in a few individuals. Sometimes, this influence is so firm that it becomes one's second nature and its instructions like axiomatic principles, and each penetration into the pieces of knowledge is like the penetration of water into the roots, trunk, branches, twigs, buds, flowers, and fruits of a tree.

The penetration of a priori principles exists in both domains but is more

realities are at higher levels while the rest are at lower levels.

¹. Oppenheimer, *'Ilm wa Farzānīgī* (Science and the Common Understanding), pp. 128-131.

effective in social sciences than in natural sciences. In general, these a priori principles and perceptions are of four types:

1. Correct principles and perceptions established by sciences, philosophies, axiomatic propositions, and essential propositions;
2. Incorrect principles and perceptions that cannot be established by acceptable proofs;
3. Principles and perceptions whose validity or invalidity cannot be established; and
4. Propositions with both correct and incorrect properties

1. Correct principles and perceptions established by sciences, philosophies, axiomatic propositions, and essential propositions

As long as these principles are not related to science, they need not be absolute and eternal in all cases, because change and modification in scientific issues and principles exist, given the assumed openness of the inward and outward systems. For example, these circumstantial principles can be taken into account:

1. The need for managing life in both the individual and collective spheres;
2. Truthfulness and justice for the realization of a “rational life” in the collective sphere;
3. The necessity of paying the real value of goods and services as much as possible; and
4. Endeavor to materialize the advanced culture anchored in genuine human needs.

Since such a priori propositions are present in every situation and condition, they are for the benefit of man’s “rational life”. As long as we can see that relying on such propositions does not harm our pieces of knowledge but adorns our life as human beings with the desire for perfection, we should abide by them.

Of course, it is the desire for perfection which thinkers in social sciences want to benefit from whenever they want, and invoke their correctness after reexamination. These renewed outlooks are not only limited to fundamental propositions but include new perspectives and accurateness in all principles essentially considered correct.

2. Incorrect principles and perceptions that cannot be established by acceptable proofs

The criterion of the falsehood of a proposition is that acceptance of it will lead to contradiction or inconsistency. An example of such false principles is as follows:

“In the domain of life, power always has the upperhand.” If this a priori proposition is generalized on all categories of life, it will contradict the principle of necessity for preserving the values of a purposeful life. This is visible in the thoughts of Machiavelli and Nietzsche. In items 3 and 4, you clearly witness the a priori principles of the wickedness, corruption and egoism of human nature. What will be quoted from Machiavelli in the next topics emanate from the same a priori principles and perceptions.

The political views of Machiavelli can be summed up as follows:

1. His purpose is the establishment of united, powerful, sovereign, and centralized Italian states that are not subservient to the Church and have far-reaching influence over Europe.
2. Pessimism and support for injustice, despotism and unrestricted absolutist rule.
3. Machiavelli says that man is a political being and naturally corrupt, wicked and selfish. Thus, the absolutist state is required to establish order in society.
4. Since people have been created wicked and selfish, the statesman must be, first and foremost, egoistic, and secondly, his policy must be based upon pessimism, violent reaction, harshness, tyranny unlimited. Since man is naturally aggressive, profit-oriented and insatiably desirous of increasing his wealth, securing his position, stabilizing his condition, and perpetuating his power, which are limited by nature, conflicts threaten society with sedition unless an overwhelming power prevents this and curbs these desires. The statesman is not only the architect of the country but also the architect of morality, religion, economy, and everything else. If the statesman wants to succeed, he must not be afraid of committing evil, because without doing so, it is impossible to preserve the state. Some forms of piety lead to destruction while some forms of wickedness bring about wellbeing. Only the state which relies on force is successful and nothing else. There is no available scale and criterion for judging the actions of the statesman except political success and enhancement of power.

5. Morality, religion and other social notions are all tools in the hands of the statesmen in order to obtain power, and these are not supposed to interfere in politics, statesmanship and administering the government.

6. All rights and laws emanate from the statesman's administration. The statesman himself functions as the law and his stipulated law is binding, but he is immune from abiding by the law and morality, and the law can be abrogated and changed according to his prerogative. The statesman is above the law and can do whatever he wants. Morality is a product of the statesman's stipulated law.

7. The government is anchored in the weakness of individuals and the individuals are in need of the state in order to protect themselves from other individuals.

8. In order to obtain, enhance and preserve power, the statesman can resort to force, chicanery, guile, treachery, murder, crime, fraud, and breaching of moral rules. No kind of action is ever forbidden for him, if it is done dexterously and secretly, if necessary. If he is accused of a crime or act of injustice, the outcome of the action, which is success, shall exonerate him.¹

It is certain that if Machiavelli had not accepted "man's nature as evil and corrupt" as an a priori principle, he would not have unjustly left human beings in the claws of bloodthirsty rulers. Like other philosophers, sages and religious figures, he would have instilled the idea of justice and responsible freedom in the minds of rulers and leaders, and explained its ideal felicity to humanity. Since Machiavelli's a priori principle is totally against the essence of man, it follows that Machiavelli's ideas did not work. Neither was he able to hold a political position [again], nor create a sovereign, united and centralized Italian monarchy. Let us scrutinize the following passage:

We must consider this point just as the analytical political philosophy historians have done. By writing the book *Il Principe* (The Prince) and dedicating it to the then new Medici Pope (Giovanni), Machiavelli had also personal ambition, and through this book, he wanted to hold a political position again, through which the unification of Italy and formation of a unitary government in that country might be realized. Yet, neither was he appointed to any political position again, nor a

¹. Bahā' al-Dīn Pāzārgān, *Tārīkh-e Falsafeh-ye Siyāsī* (History of Political Philosophy), 3rd ed., vol. 2, pp. 432-433.

unified Italy came into being during that century. Medici could no longer appoint Machiavelli to any political post, and at the same time, it did not possess the necessary conditions and power to bring into existence a sovereign, unitary and centralized Italian monarchy.¹

Here, we shall briefly mention some political philosophers' assessment of Machiavelli's advice "to sacrifice all truths and values as a means to realize the objective set by a statesman for himself":

All the issues Machiavelli mentions in relation to political policy are based upon the assumption that human nature everywhere and at all times is basically selfish. The persuasive motive the statesman must rely on is indeed egoistic, i.e. based upon selfishness and self-centeredness, such as the desire to attain massive security and the concentration of power in the ruler... He again says, "Moreover, human nature has been created enormously aggressive and profit-oriented..."²

Machiavelli's a priori principle lies in his failure to distinguish between "having" and "wanting" without which human life is unmanageable, and it is based upon "I as the goal and others as means", which leads to the utmost impudence and lack of remorse in the egoistic person vis-à-vis life, values and the rights of others! It is for this reason that a number of great philosophers have rejected Machiavelli's merit to express any view on political philosophy. It is said, "Machiavelli's political writings have less philosophical dimension and more practical diplomacy and statecraft, and must be deemed diplomatic writings and not philosophical."³

Meanwhile, we shall witness in this very discourse the psychological impacts of Nietzsche, which have been derived from his a priori principle on the primacy of the desire for power:

We have pointed out that during his student days in Leipzig, Nietzsche discovered the book *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (The World as Will and Representation) written by Arthur Schopenhauer, and although Nietzsche was pessimistic about it, it motivated him a lot in spite of his not being a student of Schopenhauer at all. In the

¹. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

². *Ibid.*, p. 44.

³. *Ibid.*, p. 436.

Exoneration Tragedy, for example, he would look for Schopenhauer so that he could take something as his a priori principle, call it “eternal alienation”, and manifest it in the world as well as in human life, and there, like Schopenhauer, he led a dreadful and tragic life...¹

The passage below by Nietzsche, explains his way of thinking after being influenced by Schopenhauer as his a priori principle,:

In 1865 he gets a book by Schopenhauer, entitled *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*. This book so deeply touches his soul that he says, “This book is a mirror in which I saw the entire world and life, nay the nature of the self (essence) in dreadful majesty.” He seriously engrossed himself in studying this book, reading it with utmost enthusiasm and zeal. He says, “For me, it is as if I am Schopenhauer’s addressee in this book. I perceived his epic feeling in this book and I imagined that in every line of this book Schopenhauer is standing, facing and shouting at me, “[If you can,] take an action to deny and destroy this book!”²

The very deep impact of the a priori principles upon Nietzsche’s being [which is not supposed to be such] can be clearly seen. This self-defeatism to an a priori principle renders useless all values, human principles and other correct global rules, and with an “unimaginable egoism” it takes the future of mankind in its hand! Let us closely examine this passage: “Nihilism assumes various forms. For example, one of its forms is ‘active nihilism’. That is, pessimistic submission and resignation to the effect of the vanishing of values and the aimlessness of life. But there is also an active nihilism that wants to break up that which it does not believe in anymore. Nietzsche predicted the emergence of active nihilism in the ideological wars which would shake the world: “Such wars which had no precedence on the surface of the earth will break out. It is only from my time onward, will there be so-called great politics!”³

The end of belief in the a priori principle, which Nietzsche proposed for

¹. Frederick Capelston (?), *Tārīkh-e Falsafeh* (*History of Philosophy*), vol. 7, “Az Nietzsche ti Fichte (From Nietzsche to Fichte),” trans. Daryūsh āshūrī, pp. 387-388.

². Ahmad Amin and Zaki Najib Mahmud, *Dāstān-e Falsafeh-ye Jadid* (*The Account of Modern Philosophy*), vol. 3, p. 512.

³. Frederick Capelston (?), *Tārīkh-e Falsafeh* (*History of Philosophy*), vol. 7, pp. 395-396.

himself and others, was the beginning of a kind of struggle against the self, which brought to him the following result:

Nietzsche set aside his plan until his violent attack on Wagner and writing of The Case of Wagner (1888) followed by Nietzsche contra Wagner (1888). This treatise along with his other writings in 1888 such as Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist and Ecce Homo (which is a sort of autobiography) was published after his bankruptcy. Apparently, the writings of that year show the extreme tension and mental agitation he was experiencing, especially that a person at the peak of self-praise would clearly show. At the end of the year, definite signs of insanity were manifested in him and in January 1899 Nietzsche was brought from Turin where he was then living to a psychiatric clinic in Basel. From then on, he never recovered, but after some medication in Basel and then Jena, he was able to go to his mother's home in Naumburg. This became the fate of a popular person, though he was in such a condition that he could not comprehend it. Nietzsche died on August 25, 1900.¹

In this manner, the pages of life of a man ended along the path of proving the essence of power and power-worship, which he had allowed to dominate his mental faculties and activities. While passionately defending the primacy of power vis-à-vis the destructive contradiction between intellection and sublime human principles, and the a priori principle of "sacrificing everything, everybody, every principle, and every value before the altar of power", he buckled down in the most humiliating manner. The only lesson he gave mankind was: "Be aware and careful! By bombarding a baseless a priori principle, you must not initially take a step to wage an all-out war against human souls and then struggle against the self, and commit suicide!"

3. Principles and perceptions whose validity or invalidity cannot be established

These are like natural parts, divisible ad infinitum. These principles cannot be inculcated into the minds of wary and intelligent individuals who are well informed of the fundamentals of science and knowledge. Therefore, as pointed earlier, belief in and abidance with such principles cannot bring any harm to science and knowledge.

¹. *Ibid.*, p. 385.

If the validity or invalidity of such principles has been established in advance it breeds concern if the one who believes in those principles—even invalid principles—has an outstanding personality in society, and portrays his a priori principles as established propositions. We may mention, as examples the names of Hobbes, Machiavelli, Nietzsche, and Freud. By finding the people's zeal of acceptance in every period, unfortunately, such people impose even their invalid a priori principles on the unwary.

4. Propositions with both correct and incorrect properties

The sensitivity of this group lies in the fact that distinguishing the correct and incorrect aspects is very difficult for most people, especially if the correct aspect is more attractive while the incorrect aspect is unnoticeable. The best example of such perceived principles is the same principle of power. Power in its different forms, is the administrator's most fundamental motivating element. It is power, which removes obstacles in life including natural and human obstacles. It is power, which brings into existence and enhances advancement in all its different forms. Power is one of the Essential Attributes of God; that is, the Regulator of the universe. On the other hand, it is power that causes selfishness and self-centeredness. It is power that tramples upon the rights of the weak, prompting its holder to treat the weak as such. It is power that crushes all human values and principles.

The ways to erase the effects of belief in the incorrect aspect of such principles are as follows:

1. Correct interpretation. Firstly, we must embark on interpreting and explaining the proposition. This proposition (a priori principle under discussion) is power. It can be said that power means the agent of motion and change. As we can see, this subject is the most basic agent of activity in the universe, human subsistence and the attainment of its ideal form. Given this definition of power, this subject is the greatest divine bounty given to human beings to make desirable changes in the realm of the universe.
2. The manner of utilizing the principle has two dimensions, viz. constructive and destructive. Since the application of such subjects are related to the human "ego" (personality), if the personality of a strong person is wholesome and excellent, he is safe from the disobedience of the "natural ego", which has no motive or objective except circumambulating around itself and self-aggrandizement. Definitely, if he takes the constructive dimension of power as his driving force and never tramples upon the rights

and lives of the downtrodden he should consider it as a victory for himself. And if one's personality is imprisoned by the power he acquires, obviously his "natural ego" will lay the foundation of disobedience and no principles, will be of any moment to him and he will extinguish them as sources of trouble.

As the erroneous a priori principles become more influential in man's material and spiritual life, their menacing harm is more profound. Such harmful principles are those of absurdism, the primacy of the sexual instinct, power-centeredness, and sacrificing every moral truth in order to attain a desired objective.

5. A Priori Principles can even Influence Natural Science and Philosophical Findings

This is possible to a greater extent in social sciences than in natural sciences because most fundamental propositions in social sciences are arrived at from what is conceived of man's being. Man's mental abstraction of the realities within him such as desire for power, selfishness, removal of weakness, perception of and inclination to beauty, utilitarian tendency, hedonism, triumph in competitions, desire for happiness, and abhorrence of sadness is a difficult task that requires power and personal wellbeing. It can be said that one of the most fundamental reasons for the decline in social sciences is the inability of most people to mentally abstract a priori principles that stem from racial, environmental and cultural factors as well as accepted general propositions. A priori principles in the findings of natural sciences and philosophy can be kept away on account of their being outside man's mind, psyche or "ego".

In view of man's relations with the world of nature or the universe as a whole, and the limitation of scientific awareness, and instruments, and the openness of the system of the universe to be discovered, and the system of mental data and activities, it seems that we have two amphibolous principles:

1. There is no correct essential proposition except about which there is theoretical or reasoning proposition.
2. There is no theoretical proposition except about which there is an axiomatic proposition.

For example, the proposition that natural particles are constituted of smaller particles is something axiomatic. Yet, concerning this axiomatic matter there

are theoretical propositions such as these questions: Are these particles the same things referred to by ancient thinkers (such as Democritus) or the atomic particles put forward today by modern physics? Which of the diverse things put forward today is more acceptable? The answers [to these questions] are theoretical propositions.

The same is true with correct essential propositions such as this: every happening can be measured with a specific time. This is a correct essential proposition. Meanwhile, there are numerous theoretical propositions regarding time, happening and measurement. For example, does time have an identity? Is the origin of time the discovery of actual motion? Or, can inner motions also be the origin of the discovery of time? The same is true with the propositions related to happenings and measurements.

As put forward, the question “Does science have the method of finding causative relations?” is a theoretical proposition. Born¹ thus says, “It seems that science has a method of finding the causative relations without resorting to any metaphysical principle. But this is a deception because no observation or experiment—no matter how expansive it is—can be repeated beyond a specific number, and the statement “B depends on A” always comes after experiment.”² We can consider here some axiomatic propositions concerning this proposition:

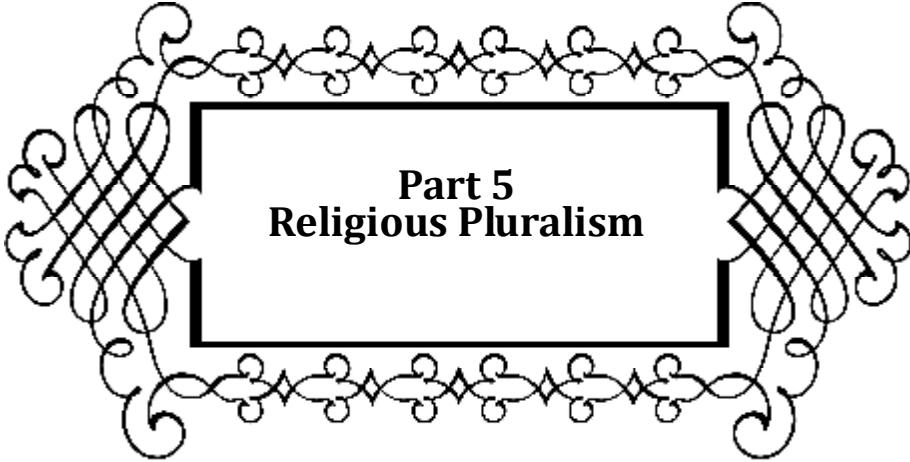
1. Science endeavors to find a method for finding the causative relations.
2. Experiment is one of the means of acquiring knowledge of the realities.
3. Finding the relationship of cause and effect must be based upon general philosophical principles or a metaphysical principle.

From 1333 to 1335 AHS (1954-1956) While I was busy writing the treatise *Irtibāt-e Insān-Jahān* (Man-World Relationship), the following question seriously drew my attention: As claimed by some thinkers and writers, is science not in need of general and philosophical principles, and do all scientific issues in all stages and dimensions emanate from pure scientific rules and laws? Hence, I examined and criticized this point to the best of my

¹. Max Born (1882 – 1970): a German-born physicist and mathematician who was instrumental in the development of quantum mechanics and won the 1954 Nobel Prize in Physics (shared with Walther Bothe). [Trans.]

². Gulshani, *Tahlīl az Dīdgāh-hā-ye Falsafī-ye Fizikdānān-e Mu'āṣir (An Analysis of the Philosophical Viewpoints of Contemporary Physicists)*, p. 226.

ability. The outcome of this examination and criticism which shows the influence of general and philosophical principles and rules in various forms is elaborately mentioned in volume 1 (pages 1-202) of the said treatise. The researchers may refer to the said source. In 1369 AHS (1990) a treatise entitled *Tahlīl az Dīdgāh-hā-ye Falsafī-ye Fīzīkdānān-e Mu‘āṣir* (An Analysis of the Philosophical Viewpoints of Contemporary Physicists) written by the esteemed scholar Dr. Mahdī Gulshanī was published. In terms of references and research, this book is well written. Through incessant efforts and sincere studies, in this book the respected author has lucidly put forward important issues in modern theoretical physics and the influence and encompassment of philosophical viewpoints of modern physicists. This book is indeed an excellent scientific and philosophical breakthrough for the students of philosophy and physical sciences in the universities and seminaries. All the topics that the erudite author has dealt with in this book are very significant. Among these topics, what is directly related to our discussion is this question: Can physicists dispense with philosophy? It is hoped that the esteemed researchers consult it for further study.



Part 5
Religious Pluralism

Chapter 1

Questions and Answers on the Scope of Religion

Question: With thanks to Your Eminence for participating in this dialogue, what is the definition of ‘religious pluralism’ and which of its levels are acceptable?

Reply: Before embarking on the subject, we must pay close attention to existing cultures of the developed societies in technology, and the justifiable use of some terms taken from them. What is meant is the permission to use all scientific terms, for every word is introduced into a society from outside. If the said term is more expressive in conveying an intended meaning, no intelligent person can prohibit the use of the term unless the society can coin an appropriate word from its own vocabulary. However, if the society has an appropriate term or word to convey the desired meaning, imitating other societies is not permissible. Imitating other communities is an outwardly ‘scientific’ camouflage to advance anti-cultural objectives. Or, it may be caused by a sort of self-defeatism generating abjectness within the scientists and scholars of that society. In the Farsi or Arabic speaking communities, for instance, the term *mantiqī* (meaning ‘logical’) is a well accepted, well understood and a well entrenched word. Now, the use of the word ‘logical’ in such communities has no other motive except a sort of self-defeatism. Also, the use of the phrase, “natural child” instead of “illegitimate child”, or “born out of wedlock”, as somehow value-laden, is not correct from our point of view. In the same manner, the use of the phrase “natural death” for suicide (although the killing of the weak by the strong is also a natural phenomenon) is equally wrong. What is correct is to call it a “crime”. The use of the term “pluralism” which conveys the meaning of multiplicity, and even diversity in a sense is similar to the use of “logical” in place of the indigenous word *mantiqī*, (Of course, knowing words of every language has its own advantage and sometimes essential, but this is a different story.)

Meanwhile, religious pluralism can be accepted in the sense that in the beginning, individuals treat certain principles as similar to common thematic principles in a religion, or accept them as their definite and indisputable principles. Then, come the questions: “Which is better for the realization of such-and-such principle, religious sources, feelings, or intellection?” In this regard, how can one perceive and arrive at any conclusion? How should one apply them? If such merit exists in it, what is the way to learn and benefit

from it?" These and similar questions are points that may show the extent of plurality or pluralism. However, since the discussion starts with a thematic principle and the purport of "existence" is juxtaposed to that of "non-existence", pluralism no longer has a double affirmative (*muhaṣṣalī*) meaning and cannot accommodate any rivalry. On the one hand, it negates another and on the other, it mutually opposes such a trend. In reality, we must have commonalities, which must be assumed to mean commonalities, and in them there must be rivalry. If there is no commonality, which discussion will be termed investigative conversation? And which rivalry can be conceived? For example, which rivalry can be conceived between theism and atheism? Similarly, what kind of rivalry can exist between a form of secularism, which holds that this world is a passageway toward eternity, and another form, which maintains that this world is the final abode, i.e. the ultimate destination? One accepts values as intrinsic while the other treats them as utilities.

Question: In your analysis, what relation can religious pluralism have with sectarian pluralism? In this regard, what point can be deduced from such Qur'ānic verses as "To you your religion, and to me my religion"?¹

Reply: The relationship between pluralism in religions and pluralism in sects is a relationship between general and particular because the general concept of religion embraces all religions and is wider than the scope of religion, which includes sects. An example of religion in its general sense is the Abrahamic Faith, which consists of the three world religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Religious pluralism means the possibility of believing in any of the said religions while sectarian pluralism is like the various theological and jurisprudential beliefs in any of the sects under consideration.

In this discussion, we must pay attention to a very important point and that is, what is meant by pluralism? Are the people's ideological stances on any of the religions within the circle of a universal faith, and on any of the sects within the circle of a specific religion equal? Can one abandon his professed religion and incline toward another religion? In view of the thematic (basic accepted) principles and essential features of every religion—which have been established for each of its followers as essential beliefs to be believed—this option is invalid and not viable. If the truths, which have been

¹. *Surat al-Kāfirūn* 109:6. [Trans.]

acknowledged as fundamental principles and essential features, are logical and based upon solid proof, they become principles that interpret and explain the life of the religious person. Therefore, if there is any possibility of relinquishing them and resorting to another set of principles and salient features, in reality the spiritual life of the said person is undermined. If it means the option of removing regional, historical and cultural elements from each of the religions within the realm of the universal faith, or from the sects within a religion, this option is completely logical, though requiring extraordinary mental or psychological ability and effort. The excellent outcome of these two types of removal is the acceptance of the universal divine religion revealed to Prophet Noah and Prophet Abraham ('a) by God for man. And, all religions and faiths associated with the said religion have manifested, after passing through the stage of Judaism and Christianity, its perfect form, which is Islam in its comprehensive sense.

Regarding the degree of validity of Qur'anic verses such as "To you your religion, and to me my religion", on the acceptability of pluralism in Islam, it must be stated that if the audience of the address, "O faithless ones!"¹ are the polytheists, then definitely "To you your religion", because this verse is a denial of polytheism, one of the most fundamental ideological pillars of Islam. The meaning of "To you your religion" is not to be construed as an affirmation of polytheism but rather, it signifies stern reproach with regards to the persistence and obstinacy of the polytheists. God says in the words of His Apostle, "You persist and remain obstinate in your polytheism and faithlessness, never relinquishing it, and this is your stance." This does not accept polytheism. For example, God says:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تَنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

*"As for the faithless, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them; they will not have faith."*²

This does not mean that their lack of faith is acceptable from the Islamic perspective. Neither does it mean cessation of hostility, nor does it refer to the religions of the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*)³ as been

¹. *Sūrat al-Kāfirūn* 109:1. [Trans.]

². *Sūrat al-Baqarah* 2:6. [Trans.]

³. People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*): the respectful title given to the Jews and Christians in the Qur'an. [Trans.]

unconditionally accepted by the Prophet (ṣ) for coexistence. In the Qur'ānic verse, “Indeed, with Allah the religion is Islam”¹ “Islam” (*al-islām*) is not stated in the indefinite form (*islām*) for in it is restriction. Of course, until the advent of the religion of Islam, *islām* assumed many diverse forms. However, since the Abrahamic faiths have undergone changes and alterations prior to Islam, what is meant by *al-islām* is its specific meaning which has manifested in the form of the Muhammedan Islam.

Question: Is acceptance of pluralism based on the epistemological interpretation of our relation with truth?

Reply: In the earlier discourse about the Law, Way and Truth (*sharī‘ah, tarīqah and haqīqah*), which is a sort of pluralism, we have said that the plurality and contradiction initiated between the three are baseless, and some of the so-called theoretical and practical mystics have deprived us of the “near truth” by showing something far from the truth. At the very moment of awakening, we are in tune with the melody of existence and we are bedfellows of the truth, yet the ocean of truth is boundless. With the foremost step into the boundless ocean of truth, we achieve aloofness from aridness.

The first *Allāhu akbar* (Allah is the greatest) after the awakening is a wave of the truth and there is no partition between them. It is true that this very first step in itself has another dimension, which prepares us for the succeeding stages, but this in itself is in the state of truth.

When a person stands firm in seeking nearness to Allah (*qurbatan illallāh*), this in itself is entry into the truth, but when he is situated in the midst of the immense waves of truth, there is no end in sight. Such is the union with truth. We attain the truth but the extent of such truth is infinite. We cannot accept the notion that, “It is not important to have attained the truth but that we are on the ways of truth”. Instead, it must be stated, that we surge and the truth is boundless. The mystics are not supposed to deprive humanity by saying that one has to tread the path for seventy or eighty years in order to attain the truth, while even now, pristine truth is in one's possession. In the past, we read this statement from John Dewey: “Considerable amounts of our cognitive interests perish out of our hands only on account of keeping a distance between ourselves and the truth.”

Meanwhile, there is another meaning of pluralism which is very important.

¹. *Sūrat al ‘Imrān* 3:19. [Trans.]

In reality, this pluralism does not mean belief in diverse truths, but it rather means abstraction of unity from diverse truths, which exist in human worldview, science and knowledge. Cognition of such unities is obtained from synthetic thoughts. At this level, we may accept pluralism as essential for abstracting a synthetic unity.

But as Russell says, “My effort is to reach the ultimate particles of knowledge” and he sets it forth through an analytical way, Mr. Russell must be asked, “Does human knowledge have no synthetic state?” Analysis and scrutiny are great, nay essential. It is good for us to know the last elements of synthesizing our knowledge and where to start. Yet, it is obvious that we also want synthetic knowledge. Through pluralism and synthesis, we have left humanity wandering between scattered parts of relative universals and the whole set of existence.

In the comparison I have done between the Islamic psychology ('ilm al-nafs) and contemporary psychology in a conference in Rūzbeh Hall, I pointed out that 'ilm al-nafs is more inclined to the synthetic method, announcing [the existence of] the magnificent edifice of psychology, nay humanities as a whole, but does not give due importance to the parts and components. Therefore, in the sphere of its activity, it is dull, monotonous and tedious! But today's psychology is good with respect to the parts and components but it has also some dullness and monotony. In spite of having a considerable amount of good components, it does not give importance to the synthetic state and a pluralism naturally governs it, and it is not clear which unit must be their unifying factor! It does not discuss and examine the “self” with such magnificence! This is while all knowledge related to the human mind and even the main roots of this knowledge pertains to the “self”, without which one cannot arrive at the ultimate explanation of the “self”. Although it is said, that a split personality is a kind of illness, expertise shows this plurality as essential. However, there is no need of closing a door so that in his limited span of life, man cannot know who he is, where he has come from, where he has come, with whom he is, where he is heading, and what he has come for. The psychologists felt compelled to pursue the analytical method and sensed it as a forced necessity, so that a person in one field of science had no knowledge of a much related field.

Question: What are the examples of the stated thematic principles or the commonalities in the realm of sociopolitical discourses? In which discourses can we discuss pluralism? What will the sociopolitical implications and

repercussions be on accepting this meaning?

Reply: The thematic principles, which in acceptability come second to the axiomatic principles, mean that the proposition of a field of science has been accepted as definite and indisputable. By considering them, the issues related to the said field of science are affirmed or negated, as the case may be, but scientifically affirming them takes place in another field of science. There are two components in mathematics, viz. number and conventional mathematical symbols. Number is the core element of mathematics. The existence of this reality is an established fact for the mathematician. He is not concerned with providing proof of the existence of number because for him it is something accepted and axiomatic. He is engrossed with his mathematical activities. Examples of conventional mathematical symbols are those of the four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division) of whole, fractional, radical, and other numbers.

In the domain of religious and sociopolitical issues, there are also some thematic principles which are being followed; for example, transmigration and the prohibition of slaughtering animals in Hinduism and the lack of sanctity of animal meat in Islamic jurisprudence. Other examples are all those political principles accepted in a society but need to be established in philosophy or another field of science; for example, the alleged separation of church and state or the fusion of the two, and inalterable cultural elements of society, which are accepted as thematic principles. This is while their correctness must be proved somewhere else, and thus, they cannot be applied in other societies.

Now, we shall embark on answering this question: In which discourses can we discuss pluralism? We must say that since thematic principles in every religion, sect or sociopolitical system are treated like correct essential propositions by their respective followers, one cannot expect these principles to be rejected, because rejecting such thematic principles is more or less tantamount to abandoning an element of the said religion, sect, or sociopolitical system. What is possible in such cases is to conduct an indepth study and examination of the sources of such thematic principles and their proofs in the sciences or schools of philosophy from which the said principles are derived and deduced. The acceptance of the said principles will depend on conformity with their proofs.

Meanwhile, what can be said regarding the last portion of your question is

that we must not strive hard that this discussion of pluralism and its relevant subjects immediately yield result in political culture because given the insufficient preliminary points, one cannot arrive at any conclusion. In political culture, it is categorically said, “We are dealing with variables.” Even if the statesman has certain inalterable ideological principles, he may disregard them in political practice, otherwise he would be included among the immature, and he always follows the majority (what is deemed expedient and desirable for many people at any given time). This is prevalent in conventional politics, and we take into account the Machiavellian way of thinking. There is no fixed stance other than what the statesman has set before as his objective, whether unity will be maintained in pursuing this objective or not! More than anything else, one must reflect on the commonalities and merits to see which things we can present to humanity as commonalities and which things can be offered as merits.

Question: If we limit pluralism from the interreligious realm to the intrareligious realm, i.e. if we discuss plurality in the existing perceptions within a religion (just as this is our main objective in this discussion), how can you examine it and what is your ultimate analysis?

Reply: Sometimes, this plurality and diversity has an actual effect on society. For example, some individuals opposed ʻayatullāh Mīrzā Shīrāzī’s¹ religious edict (*fatwā*) of prohibiting tobacco, came forward for sometime and expressed it. It is clear that such differences are caused by the multiplicity of views on jurisprudential bases, but sometimes the effect of plurality does not appear in society, yet it occurs in the minds of individuals within the circles of discussion. In the second assumption, presenting and examining diverse views do not pose any problem at all, provided that divulging them does not cause agitation in the minds of people. In the first assumption, however, once there is interpretation, decision must naturally be made. In the level of

¹. ʻayatullāh Mīrzā Ḥasan Shīrāzī (d. 1312 AH/1894): the *mujtahid* who declared in December 1891 that “the use of tobacco is unlawful (*harām*) and tantamount to war against the Imām of the Time (‘a’)” after the production and marketing of tobacco in Iran had been made the monopoly of a British company. In obedience to his declaration, all of Iran boycotted tobacco, forcing the cancellation of the concession in early 1892. See Hamid Algar, *Religion and State in Iran in 1785-1906: The Role of the Ulama in the Qajar Period* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 205-215; Nikki Keddie, *Religion and Rebellion in Iran: The Tobacco Protest of 1891-92* (London: Frank Cass, 1966). [Trans.]

the veracious experts, this has been settled and the authority of such decision is established. In order to impart the truth to the people, it is necessary to discuss it at the societal level. We made it a condition that discussing various opinions must not cause agitation because considering their mental state, the people really want a peaceful life. Disrupting this tranquility not only loses this kind of pleasure but also leads to disorder in the religious, moral, and even legal-political culture. Concerning freedom of expression, it must be asked, "What does he want to say? To whom does he want to say it?" For one who is not an expert or an illiterate, will the freedom of expression cause anything other than anxiety and additional pain? This notion [of freedom] originated from the extreme views of freedom-worshippers such as John Stuart Mill.¹ Are all the people in the West like Hegel or Kant, and all people in the East like Mullā Ṣadrā, who can distinguish a truth from among thousands of falsehoods? The masses are not authorities and they are not well-informed. Once the discussion is disclosed in public, doubt will be created in their minds. Discussions in this proposal must be academic in form and published in specialized journals. Thereafter, their results—if ever definitely established—should be put into practice. I asked Mr. Mayer, "Why did you Germans, who have insightful philosophers, kneel down to positivism?" He said, "Nowadays, Europe—or Germany—has no philosophers; it has philosophy workers!" Will the intellect allow us to put forward hundreds of theoretical issues to philosophy workers? Never, let alone to the common people. Yes to innovation and novelty, but not to the derangement of the people's minds.

It is said that at present philosophy and basic humanities have the least number of students. With respect to law, politics, culture and others, the society has its own way and is treading another path. Just because of the attractiveness of baseless novelty, why one must be anxious for any definite reason at all?

ظالم آن قومی که چشمان دوختد و ز سخنها عالمی را سوختند

Certainly, a student who has spent many years in the university and then settles down will not easily submit to a few attractive words spoken by you and me. If we are concerned with the plight of humanity, this is no way. For the lower class and even the poor average people, all individuals are

¹. John Stuart Mill (1806-73): a British philosopher, civil servant and an influential contributor to social theory, political theory, and political economy. [Trans.]

authorities! This is especially so if these individuals are eloquent and can stir their emotions. I have totally no problem with review and reconsideration of even the most fundamentally accepted issues. In the words of Khwājawī Kirmānī,

ای مقیمان درت را عالمی در هر دمی رهروان راه عشقت هر دمی در عالمی

At every moment, you may be with a teacher, but with whom? In which environment? About which subjects? There are certain conditions necessary for any search or competition. It requires a paved ground; otherwise, we will become like the Westerners who have been subjected to contradictions, but refrained from conducting research about social sciences and opened the gate for technology.

Voltaire says, “I am such an advocate of freedom that I am willing to die for the sake of what you would freely express, although I would not agree with it.” What does the latter part of this statement mean? Apparently, it is elegant, but it is actually the last nail driven into the coffin of human principles, because under the imaginary nature of freedom and the need for information and talent, an astute writer can formulate elegant and deceptive statements and hand over helpless society to the powerful! Will Mr. Voltaire also commit suicide for this?!

Question: Is it possible, that by presenting different views in a society, in the beginning, society would be deceived and face many problems along the way, but, because of the improved level of awareness, after sometime, people would distinguish the good from the evil and follow the right path?

Reply: In essence, all issues which are put forward as new ideas are not “real”, especially philosophical, social science and ideological issues, in which personal taste and mastery of words and expressions have enormous impacts in drawing the attention of common people. For this reason, their damage may possibly be irreparable. Our contemporary time has plunged into futility because of the mushrooming of baseless views expressed in attractive words. They are a few individuals who are lovers of the truth. In today’s mechanical societies—in which technology encompasses all our existence, and individuals easily succumb to problems in life—how much opportunity can they have? I consider it problematic and even impossible. How can we take into account the lives of individuals? Of course, if this issue is necessary, the educators need to think of the way to address it and what the course of action should be. That is, here the necessity for

specialized activities is put forth. How surprising it is! Is the importance of social sciences not equal to that of a headache relieving tablet which requires the prescription of biochemists and physicians before it can be consumed? That is, different understandings must enter the scene after the experts have given their opinion on it. Of course, when it becomes clear that the current official view in society is erroneous, we must not allow the society to be sacrificed before the altar of errors. It must be candidly declared that the said view is erroneous. The courage to do so can also be gleaned from the importance of the truth. However, for us to conduct the discussion openly from the beginning is not correct. One would say something while the other would express its opposite, and if two contradictory or seemingly contradictory views are expressed, a new idea must independently enter the scene to deal with the contradiction, and in the words of Nāṣir Khusrū,

هر کسی چیزی همی گوید به نیره رأی خویش
تا گمان آیدت کو قسطای بن لوقاستی!

We say that you must give importance to the human soul in the same manner that extra care and expert opinion must be given to a prescription for the consumption of a pain-relieving tablet. So, this is a gesture of concern for the “rational life” of human beings which must not be taken as a plaything. A person who entertains doubt in the foundations of his ideological life can no longer truly render service to his society. In fact, he can no longer think correctly about his identity. A youngster who is not certain of the principles upon which his life is based, the goal of his life, and the essence of humanity—words come out of his mouth and notions get instilled in his mind similar to what does not come out of the mouths or gets instilled in the minds of even the founders of nihilism. This is not censorship of knowledge but rather concern for humanity. Hence, there is no contradiction in logically dealing with this subject while not taking human life as a plaything.

Question: Is this analysis based upon a religious principle, a scientific conduct of the Prophet (ﷺ), or as a rational understanding?

Reply: It is a rational understanding of the definite subjects of Islamic sources to logically protect the human soul from agitation, indecisiveness and inattention to the sublime goal of existence and life. In our opinion, responsible freedom has the flavor of real life. We do not have absolute freedom especially if the destiny of people is at stake. In these cases, pragmatism is correct in holding that one must also take the outcome into

account; one must not be only in love but also seriously know what he wants.

Some of Qur'ānic verses and traditions point out that if you misguide a person, you are responsible for his soul! If you do something so that the poor fellow can never be guided, you have annihilated him. Carefulness in this set of juristic laws, which strongly prohibit initiating the factors of misguidance (such as blasphemous books), keeping and promoting them, except for good utilization, confirms that freedom in presenting non-Islamic beliefs must be based upon rational motives. In the noble verse,

﴿مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَانَتْ لَهُ
قُتلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَانَمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا﴾

“That is why We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever takes a life, without [its being guilty of] manslaughter or corruption on the earth, is as though he had killed all mankind, and whoever saves a life is as though he had saved all mankind,”¹

on the basis of reliable proofs, the exegetes have considered taking a life and saving a life beyond the manifestations of physically taking and saving a life—and in a sense, worse than it. In his famous strophe-poem, Gibran Khalil Gibran² says,

فَسَارِقُ الزَّهْرَ مَذْمُومٌ وَمُحْتَقَرٌ وَسَارِقُ الْخَلْقِ يُدْعَى الْبَاسِلُ الْخَطِيرُ
وَقَاتِلُ الْجِسْمِ مَفْتُولٌ بِفَعْلَتِهِ وَقَاتِلُ الرُّوحِ لَا تَدْرِي بِهِ الْبَشَرُ

That is to say that anyone who steals a flower shall be reproached and humiliated while the one who grabs a piece of land is treated as a hero and champion! Anyone who kills a person shall be penalized while the one who commits mass murder draws nobody's attention!

Criminals of the human soul are famous under attractive titles such as “abled writer,” “free thinker,” “intellectual,” and “thinker”. Sometimes, even the grandiloquent word “philosopher” is displayed in the showcases of a society, most of whose members are deprived of profound pieces of knowledge. This is while these criminals are incapable of answering essential questions of philosophy! Now, if the subject were such that all those who expressed their

¹. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah* 5:32.

². Gibran Khalil Gibran (1883-1931): a Lebanese American artist, poet, and writer who is the third best-selling poet of all time, behind Shakespeare and Lao-Tzu. [Trans.]

views would sincerely come to the scene and the differences and competitions were constructive, fatal clashes would not have brought into existence great problems, and with the goal of “constructive competition,” no person would have persisted with his claim for no reason at all. Presentation of contrasting and differing views was prevalent during the early period of Islam. We may take into account Ṭabarī’s¹ *Al-Iḥtijāj* and the like. We can see how views and beliefs could be freely presented in the presence of the Imāms (‘a) and scrutinized. Imām al-Ridā (‘a) would put forward very sublime scientific and philosophical issues, but only with ‘Imrān Ṣābī and not for the common people who could not possibly discern the dialogue between the master and his student.

At any rate, by having two very vital principles of “rational collective life,” we move forward while always supporting the presentation of religious diversities with those who are worthy of delving into those diversities:

1.

﴿فَيَسِّرْ عِبَادَ * الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّسِعُنَ أَخْسَأَهُ أَوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأَوْلَئِكَ هُمُ أُولَئِكَ الْأَلْيَاب﴾

“So give good news to My servants who listen to the word [of Allah] and follow the best [sense] of it. They are the ones whom Allah has guided, and it is they who possess intellect.”²

2. The principle of coexistence with the basic commonalities in the natural Divine Faith:

﴿لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَلَا يُنْهِيَنَّا إِلَيْهِمْ﴾

“Allah does not forbid you in regard to those who did not make war against you on account of religion and did not expel you from your homes, that you deal with them with kindness and justice.”³

¹. Ahmad ibn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ṭabarī (d. circa 620 AH): a great Shī‘ah scholar, jurisprudent, traditionist (*muhaddith*), and historian of the sixth and early seventh century AH. Among his works are *Al-Iḥtijāj*, *Al-Kāfi fi ’l-Fiqh*, *Tārīkh al-A’immah* and *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh*. [Trans.]

². *Sūrat al-Zumar* 39:17-18.

³. *Sūrat al-Mumtahanah* 60:8.

﴿فُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلْمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنُكُمْ أَلَا تَعْبُدُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا تُشْرِكُ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مَّنْ دُونَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوْلُوا فَقُولُوا اشْهُدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

“Say, ‘O People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we will worship no one but Allah, and that we will not ascribe any partner to Him, and that we will not take each other as lords besides Allah’. But if they turn away, say, ‘Be witnesses that we are muslims’.”¹

Question: In conclusion, in moving toward the ideal culture, what indicators do you think can be presented in the domain of sociopolitical discourses?

Reply: By taking into account two holy verses of the Noble Qur’ān,

﴿وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى يَتَّهِمُونَ﴾

“And their affairs are by counsel among themselves”²

and

﴿وَشَارِرُهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ﴾

“And consult them in the affairs, and once you are resolved, put your trust in Allah. Indeed Allah loves those who trust in Him,”³

keeping in view the fact that knowing and deciding the subjects of life are in the hands of the people and that in determining the subjects of life the Islamic jurisprudence system is “adherent” and not “advanced”. The role and position of people in the subjects is foremost, and considering that consulting the experts and authorities is agreed upon in society, in conforming the laws to the subjects as well as in secondary laws, the people’s participation and their investigation and acceptance are of immense importance. As such, in general, the ideal culture in Islam signifies explanation and management of the “rational life” of human beings in both the individual and collective realms for the best possible goodness in both the material and spiritual dimensions. The things that have an “advanced” feature in the said two realms are the inalterable principles which pertain to the fixed needs of the human beings. God, the Creator, who knows all realities, has promoted them (fixed needs) to the people by sending down revelations to the prophets (*‘a*) and through the eternal laws of reason.

¹ *Sūrat al-’Imrān* 3:64.

² *Sūrat al-Shūrā* 42:38.

³ *Sūrat al-’Imrān* 3:159.

Index

- ‘Abd al-Salām, Muḥammad, 370
‘Alī, Kurd, 264
‘Ināyat, Ḥamīd, 264
‘Izzatī, Abū ‘l-Faḍl, 264
‘Uthmānī, Fathī, 264
Abrahamic Faith, 30, 57, 77, 202, 203, 204, 206, 224, 355, 471
Abrahamic faiths, 355, 472
Abū ‘l-Bakhtārī, 199
Abū ‘l-Ḥasan ‘Alī ibn Naṣr, 265
Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, 166, 207
Abū Ma‘shar, 442
Adab al-Sultān, 265
Adler, Alfred, 350
Ahl al-Bayt (‘a), 3, 7, 9, 11, 1, 2, 263
Ahl al-Dhimma, 146, 277
Ahriman, 186
Akhlaq-e Nāṣirī, 261
Al-Ahkām al-Saltāniyyah, 260, 261
Al-Ahkām al-Saltāniyyah wa ‘l-Wālīyāt Jam ‘bayn al-Masā’il al-Shar‘iyyah wa ‘s-Siyāsiyyah, 260
Al-Amwāl, 260
Al-Fikr al-Islāmī wa ‘l-Mujtama‘a ‘l-Mu‘āṣir fī Mushkilāt al-Hukm wa ‘t-Tawjīh, 264
Al-Fikr al-Islāmī wa ‘t-Tatawwar, 264
Al-Iḥtijāj, 481
Al-Imāmah wa ‘s-Siyāsah, 261
Al-Islām al-Nazm al-Insānī, 264
Al-Islām wa ‘l-Hadārat al-‘Arabiyyah, 264
Al-Islām wa ‘t-Takāmul al-Ijtīmā‘ī, 264
Al-Kharāj, 260, 261
Al-Kharāj wa Ṣan ‘at al-Kitāb, 261
Al-Lawāmi‘ al-Ilāhiyyah, 264, 265
Al-Muqaddimah, 184, 185, 235, 261, 262, 264
Al-Siyāsah Min Wāqi‘a ‘l-Islām, 264
Al-Siyāsat al-Madīnah, 261
Al-Walāt wa ‘l-Quḍāt, 261
Al-Wathā‘iq al-Siyasiyyah, 260
Amīr Kabīr (Mīrzā Taqī Khān), 239
Anaxagoras, 367, 368, 398
Anaximenes, 367, 398
Andīsheh-ye Siyāsī dar Islām-e Mu‘āṣir, 264
Andreski, Stanislav, 349, 350, 351, 352
Answer to Job, 71
Aquinas, Thomas, 212
ārā Ahl al-Madīnat al-Fādilah, 261
Archaeopteryx, 416
Archelaus, 367, 398
Aristotle, 16, 73, 212, 213, 214, 215, 303, 314, 316, 317, 318, 349, 355, 366, 367, 368, 442
Armin, Herman, 348
Asadī, Muḥammad Ridā, 3
Aston, W. G., 13, 28
Bahmanyār, 369, 397
Balkhī, Ahmad ibn Sahl Abū Zayd, 265
Barth, Karl, 14, 63, 87, 88
Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, Jules, 316
Becquerel, Antoine Henri, 414
Bergson, Henri, 383, 384
Berkeley, George, 401, 476
Berlin University, 404
Bernard, Claude, 240, 378, 389, 398, 405
Berthelot, Marcellin Pierre Eugène, 416
Bīrūnī, Abū Rayhān Muḥammad

- ibn Ahmad, 72, 207, 349
 Black, Davidson, 448
 Bohemia, 396
 Bohr, Niels Henrik David, 349, 359, 393, 403, 425, 452
 Bolzano, Bernard, 378, 398
 Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, 13, 43, 49
 Born, Max, 464
 Boscovich, Roger Joseph, 382, 401
 Boule, Marcellin, 448
 Boutroux, Emile, 383, 398
 Brehier, Louis, 217
 Brunetière, Ferdinand, 416
 Bruno, Giordano, 370, 400
 Buddhism, 19, 21, 35, 202
 Bultmann, Rudolf Karl, 14, 81
 Caesaropapism, 217
 Caligula, 179, 255, 333
 Calvin, John, 219
 Campanella, Tommaso, 381
 Carlyle, Thomas, 380, 398, 406
 Cassirer, 13, 43, 55
 Catholicism, 16, 202, 212, 218, 219, 378
 Cesare Borgia, 179, 333
 Children of Israel (*banī isrā'īl*), 126, 127, 154, 286, 480
 Christianity, 30, 52, 53, 57, 77, 81, 86, 88, 89, 127, 202, 216, 217, 221, 223, 224, 228, 355, 471
 Comte, Auguste, 74, 416, 450, 451
 Confucianism, 202
 Conklin, E.G., 418
 Constantine the Great, 216
 Copernicus, Nicolaus, 382, 401
 Dante (Durante degli Alighieri), 212
 Darwin, Charles, 348, 416, 417, 447
 Darwinism, 417, 448
 Daynūrī, Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah, 261
 De Vries, Hugo Marie, 416
 Democritus, 367, 368, 370, 392, 398, 464
 Descartes, René, 349, 398, 399, 414, 432
 Dewey, John, 14, 43, 58, 59, 382, 401, 473
 Dhu‘lab al-Yamānī, 44, 47
Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung (The World as Will and Representation), 459, 460
 Dr. Qarāmālikī, 3, 8, 11, 15
 Dubois, Eugène, 448
 Duhem, Pierre, 415
 Durkheim, David Émile, 14, 83, 84
Ecce Homo, 460
 Eckhart, Meister, 370, 397
 Einstein, Albert, 182, 183, 349, 381, 384, 385, 388, 391, 398, 411, 432
 Ellis, Henry Havelock, 13, 43, 50, 51
 Empedocles, 368, 369
Encyclopædia Britannica, 211, 212, 216, 217
 Epicureanism, 195
 Epicurus, 195
 Erastianism, 221
 Erasmus, Thomas, 221
 Eriugena, Johannes Scotus, 370
 Euclides of Megara, 368
 Evangel, 224, 262
Experimental Medicine, 405
 Faḍālah ibn Ayyūb, 172
Falsafeh-ye Siyāsī-ye Islām, 264
 Fārābī, Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad Ṭurkhān, 72, 73, 173, 207, 261, 349, 369, 397, 442
 Farrā’, Abū Ya‘lā Muḥammad ibn al-Husayn, 261
 Feaver, J. Clayton, 14, 84, 85, 86
 Fechner, Gustav Theodor, 381, 400
 Feuerbach, Ludwig Andreas von, 14, 74
 Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 372, 373, 402, 460

- Fine, Arthur, 393, 398
Fiqh al-Siyāsah, 261
 First School of Vienna, 70
 Flammarion, Nicolas Camille, 423, 424
 Frazer, James George, 14, 63, 79, 351
 Freud, Sigmund, 14, 15, 16, 63, 70, 80, 81, 195, 350, 445, 462
 Furger, Dirg, 348
 Ganu, 417
 Geisler, Norman L., 13, 39, 40
 Gell-Mann, Murray, 348
 Genghis Khan, 178, 195, 255, 333
 Gibran, Gibran Khalil, 480
 Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 392
 Goldziher, Ignác (Yitzhaq Yehuda), 14, 77
 Gulshanī, Mahdī, 389, 464, 465
 Guyau, Jean-Marie, 374, 375, 400
 Hals, Schmidt, 348
 Hamilton, William, 380, 398
 Ḥamzah ibn Muḥammad al-Tayyār, 172
 Hasan ibn Ḥaytham, 207
 Ḥasan, Ḥasan Ibrāhīm, 261
 Haydarābādī, Dr. Muḥammad Ḥamīd Allāh, 260
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 373, 374, 376, 397, 402, 477
 Heidegger, Martin, 381, 398
 Heisenberg, Werner Karl, 46, 392, 403
 Helmholtz, Hermann Ludwig Ferdinand von, 349, 376, 377, 386, 398, 404, 405, 416
 Heraclides, 367, 397
 Herder, Johann Gottfried von, 14, 72, 73
 Hertz, Heinrich, 404
 Hick, John, 19, 25
Hikmat-e Uṣūl-e Siyāsī-ye Islām, 259, 267
 Hobbes, Thomas, 14, 88, 257, 462
 Hugo, Victor-Marie, 416, 442
 Hujr ibn ‘Udayy, 207
Hukūmat az Nazar-e Islām, 261
 Hulagu Khan, 178, 255
 Hume, David, 346, 426
 Hylozoism, 400
 Ibn al-Ikhwah (Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Qurshī), 260
 Ibn al-Tayhān, 166
 Ibn Haytham (Alhazen), 442
 Ibn Khaldūn, Abū Zayd ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Muḥammad, 72, 184, 185, 187, 188, 235, 236, 261, 262, 264, 442
 Ibn Ma’qal, Abū Dalaf al-Qāsim ibn ‘Isā, 265
 Ibn Mūlijim Murādī, 255
 Ibn Rushd, Abū ’l-Walīd Muḥammad ibn Ahmad (Averroes), 72, 173
 Ibn Salām, Abū ‘Ubayd al-Qāsim, 260
 Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), 49, 59, 60, 72, 173, 207, 355, 369, 397, 436, 442
 Ibn Taqtaqī (Muhammad ibn ‘Alī ibn Tabātabā), 261
Il Principe (The Prince), 222, 458
 Imām ‘Alī al-Ridā (‘a), 481
 Imām ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (‘a), 33, 35, 44, 47, 123, 138, 167, 169, 201, 231, 249, 255, 259, 260, 267, 285, 329, 332
 Imām Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq (‘a), 155, 172, 199, 287, 288
 Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir (‘a), 199
 Imām Muḥammad al-Mahdī (‘a), 2
 Institute of Islamic Culture and Thought, 2, 3, 4, 6
 Ion the Poet, 406
 Īrānshahrī, 369, 398
Irtibāt-e Insān-Jahān (Man-World Relationship), 465
 Islam, 17, 2, 29, 30, 40, 53, 54, 57, 68, 74, 77, 78, 83, 113, 124, 126,

- 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 135, 136, 143, 145, 166, 168, 174, 175, 176, 181, 183, 184, 187, 189, 192, 193, 194, 197, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 212, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 230, 232, 236, 259, 260, 262, 264, 265, 266, 274, 276, 300, 302, 312, 355, 358, 471, 472, 481, 483
Ittilā'at newspaper, 4
Ja'farī, 'Allāmah Muḥammad
Taqī, 9, 11, 2, 3, 4, 6, 11, 99, 259, 358, 387
Jabr wa Ikhtiyār, 387
Jackson, Robert H., 131, 132, 133, 134, 229, 230, 232
James, William, 14, 18, 19, 63, 64, 71, 415, 432
Jastrow, Robert, 14, 60, 61
Jawāhir al-Kalām, 174
Johnson, Paul, 15, 87, 93
Judaism, 30, 57, 77, 202, 216, 223, 224, 355, 471
Jung, Carl Gustav, 14, 6, 14, 15, 63, 70, 71, 350
Kant, Immanuel, 15, 40, 87, 91, 92, 371, 372, 373, 378, 380, 398, 477
Kauffman, Walter Arnold, 63
Kepler, Johannes, 46, 414
Khwājah Naṣīr al-Ṭūsī, 45, 49, 173, 261, 349, 365, 369, 398, 436
Khwājah Nizām al-Mulk, 261
Khwājawī Kirmānī, 477
Kindī, 207, 261
King, Samuel, 14, 63, 76
Kitāb al-Dawlah, 265
Kitāb al-Fakhrī l-ādāb al-Saltāniyyah wa 'd-Duwal al-Islāmiyyah, 261
Kitāb al-Siyāsah, 265
Kitāb al-Siyāsah al-Kabīr, 265
Kitāb al-Siyāsah al-Ṣaghīr, 265
Kluckhohn, Clyde, 66, 416
Kneller, George F., 406
Koestenbaum, Peter, 14, 79, 80
Kremer, Walter, 348
Kroeber, Alfred Louis, 66
Kulaynī, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb, 3, 207
Külp, Oswald, 384, 398, 432
Kumayl ibn Ziyād al-Nakha'ī, 166
Küppers, Bernd-Olaf, 424
Laertius, Diogenes, 367, 398
Lamarckism, 417, 418
Langdon-Davies, John Eric, 382, 383, 397, 452
Langevin, Paul, 381
Laozi, 359, 363, 393
Law of Continuity, 414
Lazarsfeld, Paul Felix, 350
Le Bon, Gustave, 78, 264
Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 349, 371, 376, 400, 413, 414
Leucippus, 398
Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 351
Life = Physics + Chemistry? *Life from the Perspective of Eminent Physicists*, 424
Locke, John, 378, 398
logic, 9, 10, 11, 20, 43, 72, 174, 178, 180, 185, 212, 268, 344, 382, 430, 432
Lotze, Hermann, 375, 376, 400
Louis IV (Roman Emperor), 220
Louis, Robert, 66, 77, 217, 220, 383, 404
Luther, Martin, 218
Ma 'ālim al-Qurriyyah fī Ahkām al-Hasabah, 260
Mach, Ernst, 415
Machiavelli, Niccolò di Bernardo dei, 222, 333, 457, 458, 459, 462
Machiavellianism, 222
Makātib al-Rasūl, 260
Malebranche, Nicolas, 379, 397
Mālik al-Ashtar, 123, 166, 201, 207, 231, 260, 267
Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, 369, 397
Martin, Everett Dean, 15, 90
Marx, Karl, 14, 83

- mathematics, 23, 51, 72, 174, 191, 351, 392, 404, 413, 442, 474
- Mathnawī-ye Ma‘nawī*, 13, 14, 15, 30, 36, 37, 38, 58, 72, 168, 171, 182, 195, 197, 201, 243, 244, 251, 253, 311, 312, 316, 318, 337, 345, 370, 388, 400, 437
- Māwardī, Aqdā ’l-Qadāt Abū ’l-Hasan ‘Alī ibn Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī al-Baghdādī, 260
- Mayr, Ernst, 417
- McClelland, David, 351
- Medici Pope (Giovanni), 458
- Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, 70
- Mendel, Gregor Johann, 417
- Mendeleev Table, 355
- Mendeleev, Dmitri Ivanovich, 355
- Mill, John Stuart, 477
- Miqdād ibn Aswad, 166, 207
- Miqdād, Fāḍil, 264, 265
- Mīr Dāmād (Mīr Muhammad Bāqīr Astarābādī), 72, 73, 174, 207, 369, 398, 442
- Mīr Findiriskī, 369, 398
- Mullā Ṣadrā (Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī), 72, 73, 174, 359, 369, 477
- Müller, Max, 13, 43, 48, 49
- Nā’īnī, Mīrzā Muhammad Husayn, 261
- Nahj al-Balāghah*, 33, 99, 110, 111, 123, 124, 127, 138, 169, 170, 174, 199, 201, 231, 256, 260, 358
- Napoleon Bonaparte, 178
- Naqd wa Nażar* journal, 4
- Naraqī, Mullā Ahmad, 265
- Nāṣir Khusrū al-Qubādiyānī, 39, 56, 103, 242, 331, 479
- Neoplatonism, 369
- Nero, 178, 179, 255, 256, 333
- Newton, Isaac, 49, 360, 396
- Nicomachean Ethics*, 215
- Nietzsche contra Wagner*, 460
- Nietzsche, Friedrich, 333, 382, 401, 459, 460, 462
- Nizāmī Ganjavī, 119, 248
- Nobel, Alfred Bernhard, 46, 182, 349, 404, 414, 464
- Oparin, Alexander Ivanovich, 423, 424, 426, 427
- Oppenheimer, Julius Robert, 421, 453, 454, 455
- Otto, Rudolf, 13, 43, 54, 55, 71
- Papin, Denis, 408
- Paracelsica*, 70, 71
- Paris Commune, 415
- Parmenides, 368, 369, 397
- Parsons, Talcott, 19, 350
- Pascal, Blaise, 377, 398, 424
- Pasteur, Louis, 404
- Pentateuch, 131, 229
- People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*), 206, 355, 472, 482
- Personal Influence*, 350
- philosophers, 74
- philosophy, 3, 4, 8, 9, 17, 22, 25, 40, 51, 53, 54, 55, 70, 72, 79, 85, 90, 104, 124, 126, 141, 171, 173, 174, 177, 187, 195, 212, 221, 228, 232, 236, 255, 259, 260, 262, 264, 266, 302, 303, 304, 316, 318, 319, 325, 326, 328, 329, 333, 335, 336, 338, 345, 346, 347, 349, 356, 359, 364, 365, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 375, 376, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 392, 396, 402, 404, 414, 421, 422, 425, 433, 435, 436, 442, 445, 446, 450, 451, 457, 458, 459, 463, 464, 465, 474, 475, 477, 481
- Physiocrats, 179
- Planck, Max, 45, 46, 49, 349, 377, 386, 387, 398, 404, 409, 413, 421, 422, 432, 434
- Plato, 180, 212, 303, 313, 314, 315, 316, 318, 319, 349, 365, 366, 368, 369, 392, 397, 406, 442
- Platonic Dreams, 319
- pluralism, 4, 9, 15, 64, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476
- Poincaré, Henri, 381, 415, 430, 431

- Pope Boniface VIII, 218
 Pope John XXII, 220
Pragmatism
A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking, 64
 Princeton University, 262, 355, 418
 Prophet ‘Īsā (Jesus) (‘a), 204, 218, 297
 Prophet Ibrāhīm (Abraham) (‘a), 32, 34, 127, 166, 197, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 471
 Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ), 34, 132, 133, 166, 204, 205, 228, 232
 Prophet Mūsā (Moses) (‘a), 34, 40, 166, 204, 205
 Prophet Nūh (Noah) (‘a), 34, 205
 Prophet Yahyā (John the Baptist) (‘a), 297
 Protestantism, 202
Psychology and Alchemy, 71
Psychology and Religion, 70
 Pythagoras, 367, 398, 399
 Qādī Abū Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm, 260
 Qalāwun al-Ṣālihī, Sayf al-Dīn, 69
 Qudāmah ibn Ja‘far, 265
 Quddāmah ibn Ja‘far, 261
 Rāfi‘ī, Muṣṭafā, 264
 Rāzī, Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā, 369, 398
 religion, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 113, 115, 116, 117, 121, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 130, 131, 132, 133, 135, 138, 166, 167, 168, 170, 174, 175, 183, 184, 186, 188, 189, 190, 191, 194, 195, 197, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 212, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 232, 235, 236, 237, 242, 245, 246, 247, 248, 253, 255, 256, 257, 261, 262, 265, 267, 268, 285, 294, 298, 301, 302, 307, 312, 316, 317, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 331, 333, 335, 338, 345, 346, 347, 349, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 361, 364, 365, 366, 369, 383, 385, 409, 415, 419, 420, 430, 434, 435, 436, 445, 446, 447, 457, 470, 471, 472, 475, 476, 482
Religion in Philosophical and Cultural Perspective, 84
 Ritschl, Albrecht, 14, 54, 87, 88
 Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 76, 215, 228, 229, 357, 408, 409, 449
 Rousseau, Pierre, 76, 215, 228, 229, 357, 408, 409, 449
 Rūmī (Mawlawī Jalāl al-Dīn)
 Muḥammad al-Balkhī), 13, 58, 243, 251, 252, 311, 312, 337, 345, 370, 388, 389, 400, 437
 Rūmī, Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad, 13, 14, 36, 37, 38, 58, 171, 182, 195, 197, 201, 243, 244, 251, 252, 311, 312, 316, 318, 337, 345, 370, 388, 389, 400, 437
 Rūmī, Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn, 13, 14, 36, 37, 38, 57, 58, 72, 80, 168, 171, 174, 182, 195, 197, 201, 207, 243, 244, 250, 251, 253, 311, 312, 316, 318, 337, 345, 349, 370, 388, 397, 399, 400, 401, 436, 437, 442
 Russell, Bertrand, 254, 383, 385, 388, 389, 397, 403, 432, 473
 Rutherford, Ernest, 414
 Sabeanism, 355
 Sabziwārī, 12, 168
 Saint Peter, 218
 Salmān al-Fārsī, 166, 207
 Samkhya, 367, 397
 Santayana, George, 13, 43, 53, 379, 398
 Sarguzasht-e Andīsheh, 174

- Sartre, Jean-Paul, 14, 43, 57, 84, 195, 442
- Şawīlī, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-‘Abbās, 265
- Sayyid al-Rađī, 260
- Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph, 373, 402
- Schiller, Friedrich, 382
- Schleiermacher, Friedrich Daniel Ernst, 14, 63, 73
- Schopenhauer, Arthur, 379, 398, 459, 460
- Schrödinger, Erwin, 391, 398, 424
- science, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 48, 51, 52, 53, 55, 64, 70, 72, 78, 79, 83, 167, 173, 177, 181, 192, 194, 195, 212, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 228, 240, 262, 302, 303, 321, 325, 326, 328, 329, 333, 335, 336, 338, 339, 340, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 353, 354, 355, 358, 359, 360, 361, 363, 364, 365, 376, 377, 378, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 396, 397, 398, 400, 402, 403, 406, 407, 409, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 425, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 438, 439, 443, 445, 446, 447, 448, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 461, 463, 464, 465, 469, 473, 474, 475, 478
- secularism, 85, 211, 212, 215, 216, 219, 220, 221, 222, 230, 245, 246, 247, 251, 255, 257, 303, 305, 447, 470
- Shabistarī, Mahmūd, 50, 51, 240, 241
- Shahīd al-Awwal (Muhammad ibn Jamāl al-Dīn al-Makkī), 260
- Shaltūt, Mahmūd, 264
- Sharī‘atī, ‘Alī, 13, 32, 33, 36, 37, 38
- Shaykh al-Ṣadūq, 3, 141, 199, 207, 208
- Shibli Shamil, 166
- Shinākht (Knowledge)*, 340
- Shintoism, 202
- Shīrāzī, Mīrzā Ḥasan, 476
- Shīrāzī, Sayyid Muḥammad Husaynī, 261
- Shīrāzī, Sayyid Ṣādiq, 264
- Singer, Charles Joseph, 448
- Siyāsat al-Mulūk*, 265
- Siyāsatnāmeh*, 261
- Skinner, Burrhus Frederic, 350
- Smith, Wilfred Cantwell, 18
- Social Sciences and Sorcery*, 349, 352
- Socrates, 212, 255, 303, 349, 367, 368, 406, 442
- Soddy, Frederick, 414
- Sorokin, Pitirim Alexandrovich, 406
- Spencer, Herbert, 13, 43, 44, 45, 376, 377, 378, 398, 400, 414
- Spengler, Oswald Manuel Arnold Gottfried, 13, 43, 51
- Spinoza, Baruch, 380, 398
- St. Bonaventure, 368, 398
- Stoicism, 368
- Sufis, 34
- Taine, Hippolyte, 381, 398
- Tāliqānī, Sayyid Mahmūd, 261
- Tamerlane, 178, 255, 333
- Tanbīh al-Imāmah wa Tanzīh al-Millah*, 261
- Tārīkh-e Siyāsī wa Dīnī wa Farhangī dar Islām*, 261
- Tārīkh-e Tamaddun-e Islāmī*, 264
- Tarjumeh wa Sharh-e Nahj al-Balāghah*, 4, 118
- Tehran, 13, 14
- Thales, 366, 367, 398
- The Antichrist*, 460
- The Case of Wagner*, 460
- The Image of the World in Modern Physics*, 377, 386, 432
- The Meaning and End of Religion*, 18, 19
- The Principles of Psychology*, 64
- The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 18, 63, 64

- Theodosius I the Great, 217
Tien, Marie, 406
Tillich, Paul, 14, 89, 90
Torah, 131, 224, 229, 262, 297
Troeltsch, Ernst, 54, 87, 88
Twilight of the Idols, 460
Two Weighty Things [*thaqalayn*],
7
Tylor, Edward Burnett, 52
Umov, Nikolay Alekseevich, 384,
398
Universal Declaration of Human
Rights, 308, 309
University of *Bordeaux*, 415
University of Paris, 129, 233
Uways al-Qarnī, 166, 207
Vienna Circle, 445
Voltaire (François-Marie Arouet),
379, 398, 416, 478
Wagner, Moritz, 417, 460
Weidenreich, Franz, 449
Weismann, Friedrich Leopold
August, 413, 418
Weisskopf, Victor Frederick, 394,
398
Weizsäcker, Carl Friedrich
Freiherr von, 349, 394, 398
Wenzhong, Pei, 448
Where is Science Going?, 349,
386, 421, 422, 432
Whitehead, Alfred North, 15, 87,
93, 254, 265, 303, 353, 360, 382,
405, 441
Wittgenstein, Ludwig Josef
Johann, 25
Wundt, Wilhelm Maximilian, 64
Yazdān, 186
Yūnus ibn ‘Abd al-Rahmān, 172
Zaydān, Jurjī, 264
Zeno of Elea, 369
Zoroaster (Zartusht), 186
Zoroastrianism, 186, 355
Zubaydī, Sayyid Murtadā, 294
Zurich School, 70